

# CHAPTER 2: ALTERNATIVES

## INTRODUCTION

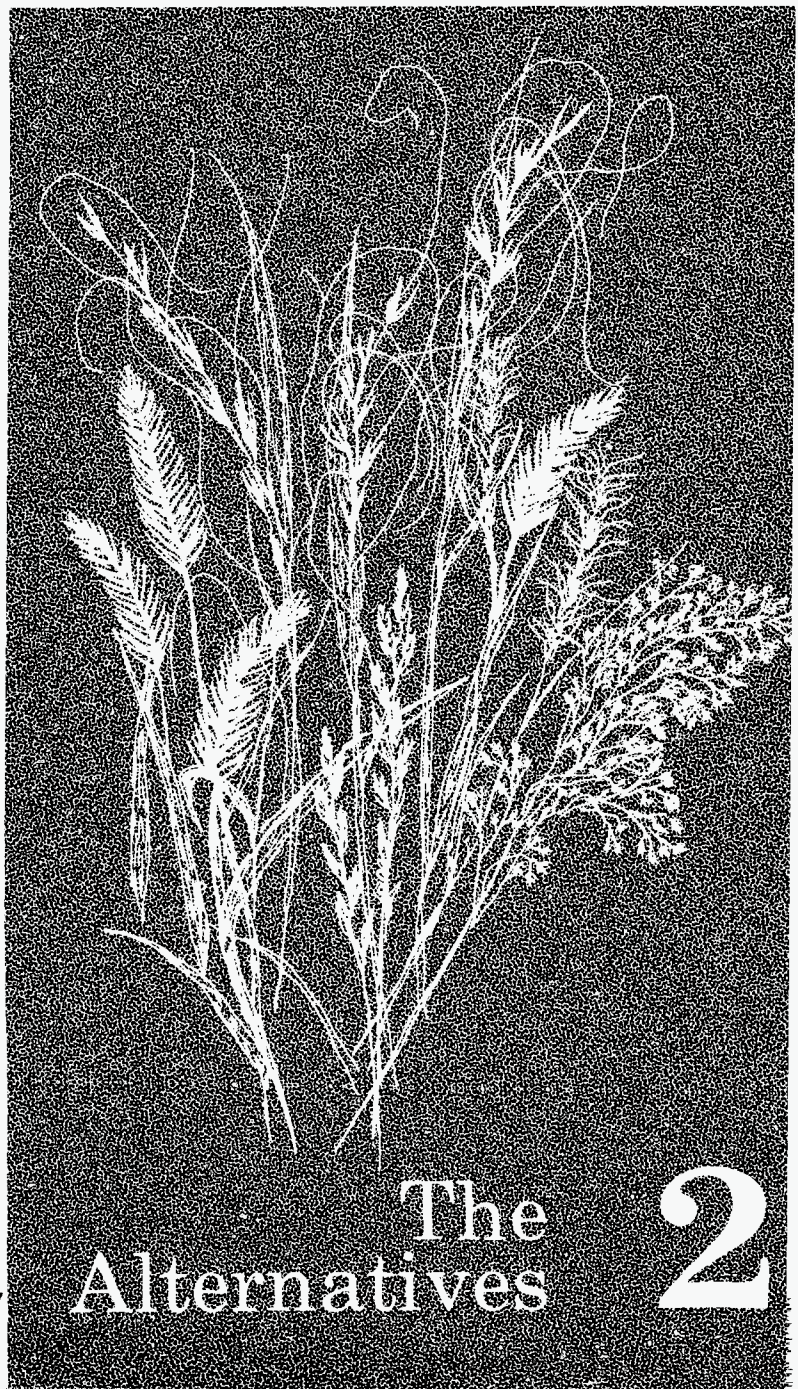
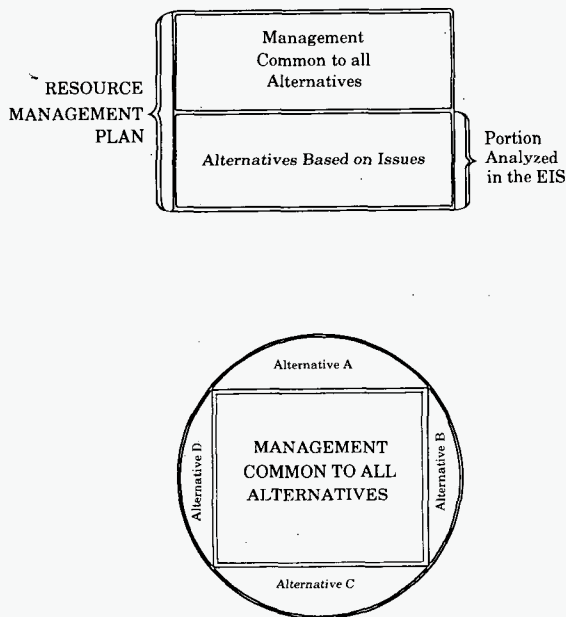
This chapter is presented in two major portions; the Management Common to All Alternatives section and the alternative descriptions.

The guidance given in the Management Common to All Alternatives section has been carried forward from existing laws, regulations and previous planning efforts. It is current, valid management guidance which will be followed no matter which alternative is selected and is a substantial portion of the Resource Management Plan (RMP). *That guidance*, combined with the *proposed alternative forms* the RMP for the entire planning area. Figure 2.1 shows the relationship of this guidance and the alternatives.

The second portion of this chapter describes the four alternatives (Alternative A, No Action; Alternative B; Alternative C; and Alternative D, the *Proposed Alternative*) designed to resolve the issues discussed in Chapter 1.

All four alternatives comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act requirement that the public land be managed on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield.

Figure 2.1 Relationship of Alternatives to Management Common to All Alternatives.



The  
Alternatives

2

## ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

Alternatives proposing maximum resource production or protection of one resource at the expense of other resources were not considered because this would violate the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) legal mandate to manage public land on a multiple use, sustained yield basis.

## MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

The following guidance will continue regardless of which alternative is selected. It's the result of existing laws, regulations and previous planning efforts. *Valid decisions from the Triangle, Blaine, South Bearpaw, Fergus and Phillips (UL-Zortman) Management Framework Plans (MFP); the Prairie Potholes EIS (1981); the Missouri Breaks Grazing EIS (1979); the Missouri Breaks Wilderness EIS (1987); the Lewistown District Oil and Gas Leasing Environmental Assessment (EA) (1981); the Lewistown Noxious Plant EA (1986); and the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Plan (1978) have been brought forward into this section.*

*The decisions listed in this section comprise a portion of each alternative analyzed and combined with the selected alternative, will serve as the Resource Management Plan.*

This section is organized by ecological and human resource components. Two of the ecological components (vegetation and wildlife & fisheries) are subdivided to identify which BLM resource program is responsible for carrying out the guidance. Thus the vegetation component is subdivided to include vegetation related guidance for soil and water, riparian, forestry, wildlife, grazing and fire programs in an effort, to group similar information. In a similar effort, the wildlife & fisheries component is subdivided to include related information from the recreation program.

### Air Quality Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will comply with national and state air quality standards. The BLM will evaluate impacts to air quality, at the activity planning level, to ensure the continuation of the Class II airshed.

#### Implementation

*Federal and state regulations require air quality monitoring for those activities which could impact existing air quality. Detailed monitoring and mitigation plans are written at the activity plan level. These measures will generally require actions to be undertaken during specific wind conditions to either disperse smoke or prevent chemical spray drift.*

Prescribed fires in the area require approval from the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Science, Air Quality Bureau. All such plans will be forwarded to the appropriate airshed zone coordinator.

Venting or flaring of hydrocarbon gases associated with hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S, sour gas) requires approval under the provisions of Notice to Lessee-4A. The Montana State Air Quality Bureau monitors this activity for compliance.

### Soils Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will maintain or improve soil productivity in the planning area by reducing erosion and increasing vegetative cover.

#### Implementation

*Surface disturbing activities or planned surface disturbances, are evaluated and mitigation developed to reduce soil erosion. The methods used to make these evaluations are described in BLM Technical Note No. 346 (Erosion Condition Classification System) and the Modified Universal Soil Loss Equation Method developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service. These books are available for review in the BLM District and State Offices and are used by soil scientists to develop mitigation measures. The BLM has developed soil suitability guidelines for specific actions (mechanical treatments, off-road vehicle (ORV), etc.) to help in soil management.*

Prior to authorizing any surface disturbing activity (including but not limited to range improvement, mineral development, right-of-way location, or livestock grazing) the BLM will evaluate the activity and if necessary apply mitigating measures; deny the authorization; or relocate the activity to a more suitable soil type location. Specific measures will be developed for soils with high erosion susceptibility, steep slopes, sparse vegetation and shallow soil depth. Surface disturbing activities on floodplains will have riparian objectives and/or mitigation measures written into the activity plans to protect ground cover and streambank stability and to reduce sediment yields. All surface disturbing activities will require an on-site evaluation to develop mitigation to reduce erosion and soil compaction and to improve soil stability and salinity control. These mitigation measures will also prescribe revegetation programs.

All proposed reservoirs will be designed to minimize erosion, saline seeps, salt accumulations (i.e., selenium) and rapid sedimentation.

Roads and trails, when part of an approved transportation plan, will be built or upgraded with due regard for environmental considerations. Cut and fill slopes should be no steeper than 3:1. After access roads are no longer needed, they will be contoured to a natural appearance and seeded with native species.

Topsoil will be stockpiled for all surface disturbing activities and will be used to rehabilitate the area when the project is completed. Exceptions to this stipulation may be granted, based on a site specific evaluation.

### Water Resource Management

Under all alternatives, surface and groundwater quality will be maintained to meet or exceed minimum state and federal water quality standards.

The BLM will continue to obtain water rights for all projects and comply with Montana water laws.

The BLM, in conjunction with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP), will recommend instream flows on the Missouri and Marias Rivers to protect stream morphology and biological and recreational



uses. Information on the recommended instream flows for the Missouri River can be found in the Missouri River Instream Flow Report, available in the Lewistown District Office.

The BLM will improve or maintain vegetative cover, especially on highly erosive soils, to reduce runoff.

*Wetlands will be protected in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order (EO) No. 11990, Protection of Wetlands. Under the provisions of this EO, the BLM must minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands when acquiring, managing and disposing of federal lands and facilities.*

### Implementation

The objectives for areas with riparian vegetation, or the potential to support such vegetation, will be to maintain or improve riparian vegetation, water and groundwater quality and control streambank erosion. *These objectives will be identified, as necessary, in activity level planning (allotment management plan, habitat management plan, etc.).*

All proposed reservoirs will require a soils and hydrologic evaluation of the site. Reservoirs *should* be designed with a minimum 15-year life expectancy and all proposed reservoirs will be evaluated to determine the need for off-site water facilities. *These facilities will be provided, if necessary.*

All surface disturbing activities will require an on-site evaluation to mitigate impacts to water quality and quantity and should not alter stream courses. Other measures to protect stream courses will be evaluated for environmental impacts prior to project approval.

*Monitoring techniques, frequency and methodologies will be developed and included in activity plans. The monitoring level will be determined after an evaluation of the resource and potential impacts.*

Pumping facilities used to extract water from the Missouri River will be permitted in accordance with *Public Law (PL) 94-486*. An environmental assessment will be completed prior to permit issuance and visual resources and surface disturbance impacts will be mitigated *to the extent possible*.

Small amounts of oil field produced water which do not meet water quality standards will be disposed of in accordance with Notice To Lessee-2B and/or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines.

The BLM will participate in the development of instream flow recommendations for the Marias River.

## Paleontological Resource Management

Major paleontological deposits within the planning area will be protected *under* current Bureau policy.

### Implementation

Permits will continue to be issued by the Montana State BLM Office, so qualified paleontologists can work on the public lands in the *planning area*. These permits can be issued for the study of significant fossils that are vertebrate, invertebrate or plant remains.

Potential impacts to paleontological resources will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If paleontological resources are encountered during construction activities, the contractor must *cease activities* and report these findings to BLM for evaluation and determination concerning the disposition of such resources.

Management plans may be developed to protect paleontological resources of scientific interest.

## Mineral Resource Management

Valid, existing mineral rights within the planning area will not be changed by any decision in this document. *None of the alternatives give BLM the discretion to prohibit mineral exploration or development on valid leases or mining claims.*

Under all alternatives, the BLM will continue to provide for the exploration and development of coal, oil, gas, locatable minerals and mineral materials.

Table 2.1 identifies by county, the acreage segregated from mineral entry. Table 2.2 identifies the *federal subsurface* acreage within the *Upper Missouri National Wild & Scenic River* (UMNWSR) and wilderness study areas (WSA) that is closed to mineral leasing and location.

TABLE 2.1  
ACREAGE SEGREGATED FROM MINERAL  
ENTRY AND LEASING<sup>1</sup>

County	Acres
Blaine	21,479.62
Hill	0
Chouteau	26,907.33
Liberty*	569.67
Toole	0
Glacier	0
Fergus	20,326.20
TOTAL	69,282.82

\*Acreage contained in the BR withdrawal in the Sweet Grass Hills - All other acreages are in wild segments of the UMNWSR

<sup>1</sup>BLM, 1987

TABLE 2.2  
ACREAGE MANAGED UNDER A  
DISCRETIONARY NO LEASE POLICY<sup>1</sup>

County	Acres
Blaine	19,448.73
Chouteau	5,343.66
Fergus	11,958.44
Phillips	4,634.40
TOTAL	41,385.23

All acreage is within the scenic and recreational sections of the UMNWSR Corridor and WSAs.

<sup>1</sup>BLM, 1987

Appendix 2.1 contains a Solicitor's opinion which explains BLM's mineral leasing program within the UMNWSR. The BLM's interpretation of this Solicitor's opinion is that new regulations which deal with the management priority given to recreation and preservation must be developed at the Washington Office level before leasing can occur in the scenic and recreational segments of the UMNWSR. Until the Secretary of the Interior directs BLM to take action to develop the needed regulations and lease terms that would lead to an active leasing program for non-wild segments, the closure will remain in effect. If and when the regulations are developed, the RMP would be amended to provide guidance for leasing.

Any new exploration activity will avoid, to the maximum extent possible, the "seen area" of the management corridor, and will utilize accepted principles of landscape architecture to minimize all visual impacts, both permanent and temporary. BLM will work with operators, concerning seismic activities, to mitigate adverse impacts to resources.



## Implementation

The current oil and gas leasing policy will continue. Appendix 1.3 describes the current oil and gas leasing, exploration, development and abandonment procedures as well as the expected extent of this program during the life of this plan.

The standard stipulations in Appendix 2.2 will be applied to all oil and gas leases issued. Special stipulations will continue to be added to leases in special areas that were identified prior to and during this planning effort. In addition, the final RMP decision may require a special stipulation incorporating all or part of the Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines (see Appendix 2.2) in the Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills. In all cases, the stipulations prescribed for federal mineral development in split estate situations apply only to the development of the federal minerals.

*These stipulations do not dictate surface management. The mitigation measures present no restrictions on surface activities conducted for purposes other than those mineral development activities which are permitted, licensed, or otherwise approved by the Bureau of Land Management.*

*Private surface owners will have the opportunity to comment on the permitting process at Application for Permit to Drill (APD) time. Negotiations between the surface owner, operator and BLM may be undertaken prior to APD approval to incorporate the surface owner concerns.*

*Applications for Permit to Drill and Sundry Notices will normally be processed according to the terms and stipulations of the lease. However, lease stipulations may be waived by the authorized officer if the identified resource is not present at the drilling site, or if BLM determines that operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts. This waiver can be granted at the authorized officer's discretion.*

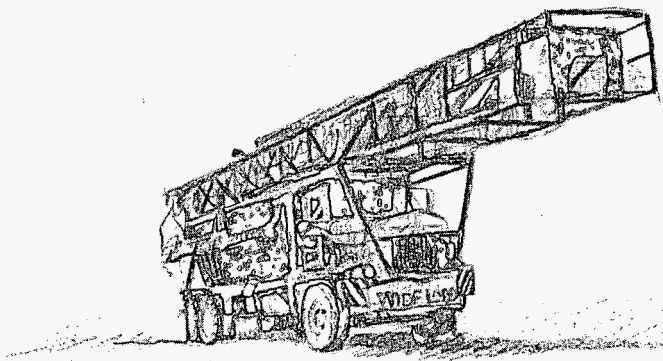
*Coal licenses for exploration and small scale use may be granted after a complete environmental review by resource specialists and the development of environmental constraints.*

*Access across federal surface to mining claims will be allowed after an environmental review of the Notice or Plan. Access is an implied right under the mining laws, but may be conditional to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation.*

*Surface management of locatable mineral development on public lands will be guided by the 43 CFR 3809 regulations and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Montana Department of State Lands (DSL) and BLM. The 43 CFR 3802 regulations will regulate locatable mineral development in wilderness study areas.*

*Disturbance exceeding the casual use level, (usually involving mechanized equipment) but less than 5 acres, occurring outside of the areas listed in 43 CFR 3809.1-4, may proceed 15 days after a Notice is filed with the BLM District Office.*

*Disturbances greater than 5 acres require filing a Plan of Operations and receiving approval before work can begin.*





A Plan of Operations must always be filed, regardless of disturbance acreage, and formal approval received from BLM prior to surface disturbance in wilderness study areas (WSA), areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC), and other areas listed in 43 CFR 3802 and 43 CFR 3809. In these areas the MOU with DSL does not apply and BLM is responsible for developing mitigating measures and plan approval.

Once a Plan of Operations is filed with the BLM, the proposed action will be analyzed (with DSL, where appropriate) and the mitigating measures needed to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation will become conditions of approval. *Plans of Operation are federal actions that require federal authorization. The public may review and comment on these specific plans. For operators covered by the MOU with the DSL, formal approval is granted by DSL with BLM concurrence.*

In WSAs, the non-impairment criteria in the *Interim Management Policy* will determine needed mitigating measures. The mitigation required will be consistent with provisions of the 43 CFR 3802/3809 regulations and with the guidance in this document to protect the public resources.



## Vegetation Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will maintain the public lands that are in satisfactory (*good or excellent*) ecological condition. On public lands with unsatisfactory (*fair or poor*) ecological condition, BLM will manage according to multiple use objectives based on ecological site potential for specific uses. These objectives will be economically and biologically feasible.

Livestock is allocated 108,355 animal unit months (AUMs) of forage each year from the public lands in the planning area: 6,631 AUMs in the Great Falls Resource Area; 86,092 AUMs in the Havre Resource Area; 10,001 AUMs in the Judith Resource Area; and 5,631 AUMs in the Phillips Resource Area. *Of the total AUMs allotted to livestock, 22,841 are found along the UMNWSR (these revised figures represent a mathematical error in the draft, not a change in allocation).*

Established allocations will be monitored for actual use, utilization, and trends in condition. The monitoring guidelines can be found in the Great Falls Monitoring Plan, the Judith Monitoring Plan, the Phillips Monitoring Plan and the Natural Resource Monitoring Plan for the Havre Resource Area. These plans are available at the respective offices.

All allotments in the planning area have been assigned to a management category *according to* the resources and problems contained in the allotment. Appendix 2.3 lists the management category, AUMs allotted, range condition and season-of-use for allotments in the planning area.

All unallocated parcels will remain available for livestock grazing. Allocations and administration of livestock grazing will occur as provided for in 43 CFR 4100. An environmental assessment will be prepared *before grazing begins* for areas not previously grazed by livestock. Grazing allocations on acquired lands will be based on management needs and reasons for acquisition. The allocation may range from zero to full capacity and will be made on a yearly basis, *or in accordance with a completed activity plan.*

Wildlife is currently allocated 79,260 AUMs within the planning area. However, populations will be allowed to expand into existing habitat. The BLM will cooperate with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and landowners to determine habitat and population size.

All vegetation increases will be allocated to watershed until soils are stabilized to a satisfactory condition as determined by an interdisciplinary team prior to increasing livestock or wildlife allocations.

*Forest products are available for sale outside of wilderness study areas and the Upper Missouri National Wild & Scenic River Corridor. The sale of forest products may be permitted by negotiated sales in the remainder of the planning area. The only timber tracts managed as commercial stands (those included in the annual allowable cut calculation) are located in the Bear's Paw Mountains.*

The BLM is required to take appropriate suppression action on all fires occurring on public lands. A fire management plan *will be prepared* for each resource area and the UMNWSR Corridor. *These plans will define the degree of suppression necessary and will discuss the use of fire as a management tool.*

Fire is a viable, economical tool *that* will be considered in vegetation manipulation projects. Each resource program will identify areas where prescribed fire can be used to achieve vegetation management objectives.

### **Soil and Water Implementation (Vegetation Related)**

Allotments in predominately fair ecological range condition should have grazing methods which periodically defer early use (April 1—May 15). Grazing methods and land treatments (keyed to specific soil subgroups) in selected areas will be implemented *as necessary*, to improve cover and reduce soil compaction.

Surface disturbance will be successfully revegetated to 90% predisturbance condition. If *this level* of revegetation is not expected to occur naturally within 3 years, the BLM will require the initiating party to rehabilitate the disturbance at the time the project is completed. Revegetation species will be determined during the site specific environmental analysis phase.

A minimum rest period of two growing seasons will be required after any major disturbance to vegetation communities. More rest may be required depending on the situation. Major disturbances are defined as mechanical manipulation of rangeland, i.e., seeding, chiseling and fire (wild or prescribed). Specific timing and the type of rest will be determined at the site specific environmental assessment phase for small disturbances.

### **Riparian Area Management Implementation (Vegetation Related)**

All manageable riparian areas will have management plans implemented by the year 2001 to maintain, restore, or improve riparian areas to achieve a healthy and productive ecological condition for maximum long-term benefits and values. This goal is stated in the Montana Riparian Management Strategy, *which is available in most BLM offices.*

*Allotment management planning will be done on an aggregate basis by considering riparian areas and their watersheds as a unit and may involve more than one AMP. Riparian habitats may require site specific management strategies including establishing riparian pastures, stream corridor fencing, specialized grazing methods, winter grazing use, a different species of livestock and rehabilitation measures.*

Management objectives will be applied to the riparian areas along the following streams and rivers: Lodge Creek, 30-mile Creek, Bullwhacker Creek, Woody Island Coulee, Corregan Coulee, Cow Creek area, East Fork Battle Creek, Savoy Creek, Irvins Coulee, Sand Coulee, Lyons Coulee, the Missouri River, Marias River, Cut Bank Creek, and Battle Creek. *This is not an all inclusive list.* Management will be implemented to obtain 90% of optimum streambank cover within 4-10 years *after implementing the activity plan.*

Livestock grazing in specialized, high-use recreation sites along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River will be controlled through fencing and/or selective grazing.

Allotment management plans (AMPs) will be developed or revised to include specific objectives for the improvement and maintenance of riparian areas. In some cases, additional site specific data may be needed before development or revision of an AMP can begin. In most cases though, site specific *information* is adequate to proceed with developing alternatives for protecting and managing these areas. On-the-ground *impacts* of livestock grazing will be determined through monitoring and evaluating these areas to determine if objectives are being met.

Measures to mitigate environmental impacts presented in the Missouri Breaks Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and *Prairie Potholes EIS* will be observed. This will include the use of an interdisciplinary team to review the location of all proposed projects and an inventory of riparian habitats to determine appropriate protection measures.

All high value waterfowl and fisheries reservoirs will be evaluated to determine the need for *permanent or temporary* fencing to promote riparian vegetation establishment. These areas will be monitored and when the riparian vegetation is well established, returned to management under a grazing method designed to protect the vegetation community. Other areas may need fencing to restore the riparian community.

Management plans *will* be written or revised to contain riparian objectives to maintain or improve existing riparian communities and to develop potential riparian areas. *Grazing permittees/lessees and other interested groups or individuals will have the opportunity to review the development of these objectives.* Management prescriptions *will* be based on intensive grazing systems to achieve better livestock distribution and upland use.

*Temporary livestock exclosures, to protect riparian communities, may be necessary when other management actions do not allow seedling establishment of riparian species. Alternate water sources would be provided if primary sources are denied. They would only be in place until riparian species seedlings are vigorous enough to withstand proper grazing use as determined by monitoring.* Where feasible, riparian pastures will be established to allow rehabilitation of riparian areas, while still allowing the proper use of grazing AUMs.

Pastures with riparian areas would not be grazed by livestock during the hot season more than 1 year out of 3 in order to maintain or improve riparian communities to a satisfactory condition (i.e., narrow stream channel, raise the water table, or increase woody vegetation to maintain 90% canopy cover). Riparian pastures outside the UMNWSR Corridor *may* be grazed *during* the cool season (May 15—June 30) to maintain or improve woody vegetation. *This stipulation could be altered if monitoring studies indicate impacts would be avoided, or caused, by this management method.*

As new information on riparian grazing becomes available, these guidelines may be changed.

The following known saline seeps will be evaluated and fenced if necessary to reclaim the seep: BR-10, BR-14, BR-31, BR-42, BR-48, BR-52, BR-71, BR-115, Bend, Nathan, Honker, O.K. and Change Reservoirs. Other saline seeps will be evaluated to determine management needs.



All existing and future riparian exclosures will be monitored *and evaluated for future removal*. At that time, AMPs will be revised to *provide management prescriptions* to maintain the riparian community condition.

The major riparian areas *within the UMNWSR*, listed in Appendix 2.4, *will* receive priority for intensive management during the life of this plan.

Potential riparian sites within the UMNWSR Corridor will be inventoried and *the Coordinated Resource Activity Plan for the UMNWSR will specify management objectives for these sites*.

The BLM will continue to manage Two Calf, Dillon Island and Grand Island Natural Areas within the UMNWSR in cooperation with the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (CMR).

### Forest Management Implementation (Vegetation Related)

All forest product sales will undergo an environmental analysis during the site specific evaluation phase.

Recreational use of forest products within the UMNWSR Corridor will be limited to dead-and-down material.

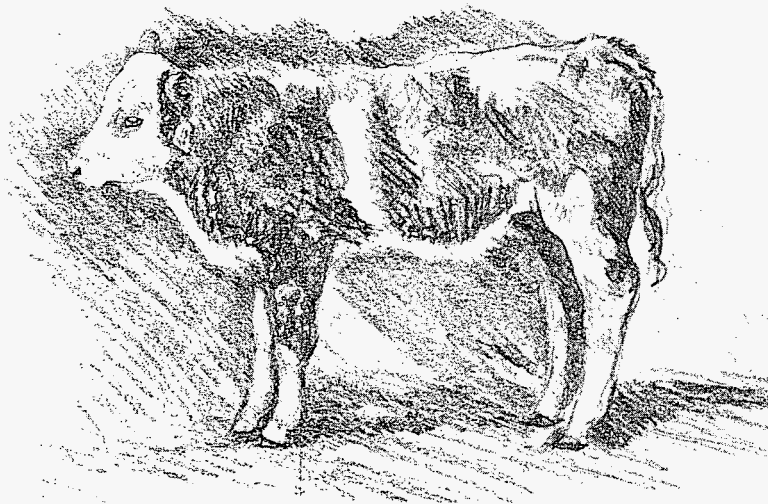
### Wildlife & Fisheries Implementation (Vegetation Related)

The BLM will maintain a diversity of forbs, grasses and shrubs on antelope range through proper livestock stocking rates and grazing methods.

Grazing methods will be used to maintain good or excellent forage and cover among grasses, forbs and shrubs on 5,100 acres of crucial elk habitat in the Sweet Grass Hills to support approximately 150 elk.

The BLM will use grazing methods to enhance bighorn sheep habitat and allow their expansion in the Missouri Breaks.

Livestock grazing methods (which may include the termination of grazing by October 31) will be used to maintain sagebrush stands with 15-50% canopy cover and 15 inches in height within 2 miles of sage grouse leks.



### Grazing Management Implementation (Vegetation Related)

Allotment management plans will be developed with multiple-use objectives to enhance vegetation production; maintain and enhance wildlife habitat; protect watersheds; reduce bare ground to the target soil vegetation cover by soil subgroups (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 2.5); and to minimize livestock/recreation conflicts.

Allotment management plans will implement some form of grazing method (i.e., rest rotation, deferred rotation, seasonal or other methods). Appendix 2.3 shows the *current* AMP status for the entire planning area. Grazing management methods will be implemented prior to mechanical treatments, unless it is clear that grazing practices alone will not reach management objectives.

Existing AMPs will be updated as dictated by monitoring results or changes in the livestock operation.

Monitoring data and analysis will be used to ensure grazing management is reaching its objectives. The monitoring data and analysis will be used to allow temporary increases or decreases in AUMs and to revise AMPs.

Allotments grazed between March 1 and May 31, will be evaluated in accordance with the Resource Area Monitoring Plans. *This direction will be found in the Natural Resources Monitoring Plan for the Havre Resource Area; and the monitoring plans for the Great Falls, Judith and Phillips Resource Areas*. If problems (such as adverse impacts to watersheds and/or wildlife) are identified, the AMP will be revised to mitigate the impacts.

Section 15 leases will be monitored according to the schedule in the resource area monitoring plan. Livestock adjustments will be made depending on the results of monitoring and inventory.

Crested wheatgrass seedings will be maintained for maximum livestock forage production; 70% of the production may be allocated to livestock when soils are stabilized to a satisfactory condition. Existing seedings will be fenced and restored to maximum production to allow for manageable pastures, *if an analysis indicates such management is feasible*. Additional crested wheatgrass seedings may be used to consolidate existing scattered stands of crested wheatgrass into a manageable unit. In addition, new seedings will be allowed on allotments where no other option is available to improve the vegetative condition.

Vegetative manipulations will be planned, developed and implemented to ensure that negative impacts to other resources (wildlife, soils, range, and watershed primarily) are identified and mitigated. Treatments will be applied if maintenance or improvement cannot be achieved with grazing management practices. Watershed parameters, topography, soil type, infiltration, and soil loss potential will also be considered and mitigated, as necessary, in vegetation manipulation projects.

Blue grama-clubmoss rangelands may be treated by mechanical means (i.e., chisel plowing or scalping) where improvement cannot be attained by using a grazing method.

The Ervin Ridge Wild Horse Herd Area, *identified under the Wild Horse and Burro Act*, would remain free of wild horses, as directed by the 1985 South Bearpaw Management Framework Plan (MFP) amendment.

The BLM will control, eradicate and/or contain noxious plant infestations on public lands under cooperative agreements with county weed boards. *The BLM is concerned with the spread of noxious plants by off-road vehicles, livestock, wildlife, birds, humans, water, contaminated seed or hay, wind and machinery.* If weed problems occur in a checkerboard ownership pattern, the BLM will initiate control measures in conjunction with the other landowners.

The containment/eradication of noxious plants will proceed as analyzed in the *Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control EIS and Supplement (1985, 1987)* and the Programmatic Environmental Assessment on Containment/Eradication of Selected Noxious Plants in the BLM Lewis-town District, May 1986. *All activity plans will address noxious plant management as necessary.*

### Fire Management Implementation (Vegetation Related)

The North Fergus Modified Suppression Plan is the only fire management plan in the area. Information will be compiled to develop fire management activity plans/environmental assessments (EAs) for each resource area. Economics, low resource values and difficult suppression terrain will be the criteria used to identify limited suppression areas.

All wildfires within the UMNWSR Corridor will receive an initial attack unless a modified suppression plan is in effect.

Standard mitigation measures for maintaining the vegetation communities are found in Appendix 2.6.

### Wildlife & Fisheries Management

The BLM will maintain and enhance habitat for wildlife. The emphasis for habitat maintenance and development will be placed on present and potential habitat for sensitive, threatened and/or endangered species, nesting waterfowl, game birds, fisheries and crucial big-game winter ranges.

General forage allocations and habitat decisions for wildlife can be found under the Vegetation Management section of this chapter. The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is responsible for population management. The BLM has made some habitat management decisions to support the populations identified by the MDFWP and those decisions are identified below.

#### Implementation

The BLM will minimize or prevent road and trail development on crucial deer and sharptailed grouse habitat areas.

Habitat enhancements (islands, nesting platforms) will be constructed on new or existing reservoirs, ponds, potholes or river systems where feasible.

Easements on or across public land for the development of private water sources will carry stipulations to enhance waterfowl habitat, as feasible.

Livestock water developments will not be built on the terminal portions of finger ridges in the Missouri Breaks if analysis identifies deer/livestock competition.

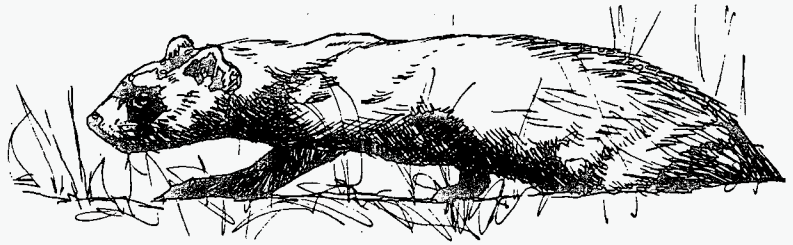
Expansion of big-game populations into existing but previously unoccupied habitat may occur. *The BLM will work with MDFWP, landowners and grazing permit holders to determine management practices, if monitoring indicates decreases in range condition in herd expansion areas. These practices may involve reducing grazing AUMs, reducing wildlife populations or other management options.*

A cooperative agreement to transplant bighorn sheep into Little Bullwhacker, Cow Creek and Bull Creek will be pursued with the MDFWP. No changes in livestock class from cows to domestic sheep will be allowed in areas occupied by bighorn sheep.

Identified great blue heron and cormorant rookeries on BLM-administered public lands will be protected from roads, campsite developments, timber cutting and other intrusions. *No disturbance will be allowed within 1,000 feet of rookeries from the start of nesting through the fledging of young birds.*

*Underwater rights-of-way crossing the Missouri River will be constructed between June 15 and August 15, to protect spawning paddlefish. Other mitigation to protect spawning paddlefish will be applied as necessary.*

No action will be initiated on BLM-administered lands which will jeopardize any federally listed threatened and endangered (T&E) plant or animal. Impacts to other sensitive species and state designated species of special interest will be evaluated and applicable mitigation developed prior to the initiation of any action on public lands.



The BLM will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to recover threatened and endangered species, including reintroduction efforts. The species of interest are the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, black-footed ferret and piping plover.

*The BLM will carry out management, consistent with the principles of multiple use, for the conservation of ESA candidate species and their habitats and will ensure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out do not contribute to the need to list any species as T&E (see BLM's Candidate Species Policy, September 27, 1987, available at BLM offices).*

*The BLM will consult with the USFWS when any action may affect a threatened or endangered species or its habitat.*

*The prairie dog town located in T. 33 N., R. 22 E., Sec. 28 will be managed to provide habitat for associated species. It may also be managed to provide some recreational shooting. Should any control measures be considered in the future, threatened and endangered or special interest species will be given priority, and necessary mitigation will be developed prior to initiating any control measures. Prairie dog towns smaller than 10 acres will not be actively managed.*



### Recreation Management Implementation (Wildlife & Fisheries Related)

Consistent with the 10-year cooperative Fish Management Plan between the BLM and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the MDFWP will be requested to stock the following reservoirs with fish: South Cassidy, Reser, BR-12, Don, North Faber, Salmo, Butch, F. R., Carol, Ridge, Zero, Gezob, and Diane. In the future, other reservoirs may be identified for fisheries management. Priority consideration will be given to reservoirs near communities. Consideration of fisheries potential will be given during the design phase of new reservoirs.

Standard mitigation measures to *minimize disturbances to* wildlife resources are found in Appendix 2.6.

### Cultural Resource Management and Protection of Traditional Cultural Values

All alternatives will provide for the enhancement and protection of cultural resources and the protection of traditional cultural values. Cultural resources are defined as those fragile and non-renewable remains of past human activities. For the purpose of this document, traditional cultural values are restricted to Native American religious activities.

#### Implementation

Cultural resources will be given full consideration in all land use planning and management decisions. The BLM will seek to ensure its undertakings avoid inadvertent damage to both federal and non-federal cultural resources.

The BLM will seek to preserve a representative sample of the full array of cultural resources for the benefit of scientific and socio-cultural use for present and future generations.

All BLM actions which may *impact* cultural resources will comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended and as implemented by 36 CFR 800. This legislation and regulation (called *the* Section 106 process) requires the following steps be taken before initiation of BLM actions:

Prior to the implementation of any federal action all cultural resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) must be identified. Cultural resources identified within the project area and potentially affected by a BLM action are evaluated in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Agreement between the BLM and SHPO on eligibility constitutes consensus, permitting the compliance process to proceed.

Once consensus exists, the nature of the effect on historic properties is determined. One of the three following determinations are made: (1) No effect—the agency, in consultation with SHPO, determines the federal undertaking will not impact eligible cultural resources. (2) No adverse effect—the agency, in consultation with the SHPO, determines there will be an effect but the effect will not be adverse. The agency submits a report to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) which describes the nature of the undertaking and a justification for a

determination of no adverse effect. The ACHP, may concur, object with conditions (project may proceed if conditions are met) or object (in this case a consultation process is initiated among ACHP, the agency and SHPO). (3) Adverse effect—when the agency determines the effect on cultural resources will be adverse, the agency, SHPO, and the ACHP will consider ways to avoid or mitigate the impact of the federal undertaking on cultural resources. Measures considered during consultation may include preservation of the cultural resource, restoration (restoring, repairing) of the cultural resource, documentation (photographs, drawings, and histories of buildings and structures), reducing the magnitude of the undertaking, redesigning the project, and data recovery (refers to archaeological sites where data may be recovered through controlled excavation). Once the consulting parties agree on the measures to avoid or mitigate the impact to eligible cultural resources by the federal undertaking, and the conditions or stipulations have been met, the project may proceed.

The procedures outlined above have been modified in portions of the RMP area by agreement between the BLM and the Montana SHPO. These modifications have reduced the need for cultural resource surveys to identify sites possibly eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BLM requires that all persons conducting cultural resource fieldwork on public lands obtain a cultural resource use permit from the Montana State Office. The District Manager authorizes and is responsible for monitoring the fieldwork proposed and actually conducted. This is accomplished through the fieldwork authorization process.

Activity plans may be developed for significant cultural resources on public lands. These plans will be written for sites evaluated through the BLM cultural resource use evaluation system. The cultural resources use categories are described in Appendix 2.7. Sites assigned a use category will be managed to achieve that use.

BLM has a clear responsibility and mandate to manage the cultural resources along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River for both preservation and enhancement. This direction has been developed into a series of management plans, including a Cultural Resource Management Plan. Specific prescriptions for management of the cultural resources along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River will consider that:

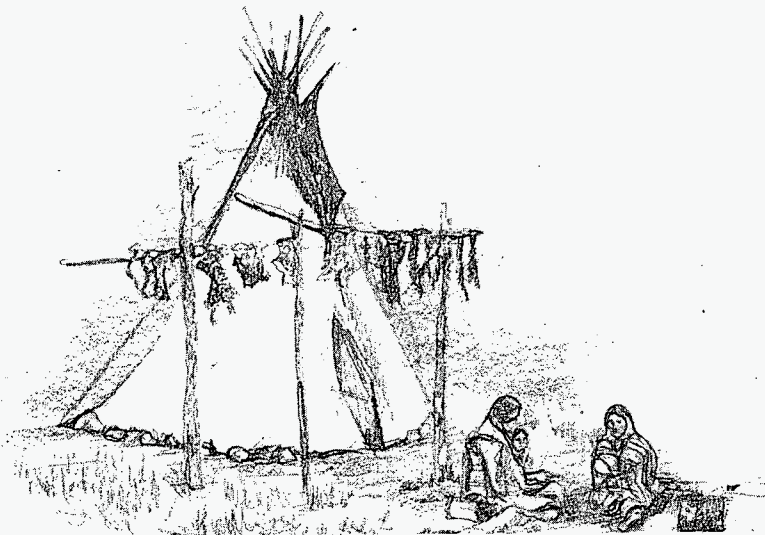
1. Historic sites will be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on; their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.
2. Prehistoric sites will be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they can add to knowledge and interpretation of the UMNWSR.
3. Historic and archaeological opportunities along the UMNWSR will be enhanced by developing interpretive potential at selected cultural sites. Resources will be selected based on access, information potential and the potential to provide important parts of river history or prehistory via interpretation. These enhancements *will* be subject to any constraints of the final RMP.

Standard mitigating measures to protect cultural resources are listed in Appendix 2.6. These measures will be applied, as *necessary*, to all federal actions.

## Implementation for Traditional Cultural Values

*The Bureau will ensure that its actions, or actions that it permits or licenses do not wrongfully infringe upon Native American religious rights.*

As required, the Bureau will consult with Native American tribes when its actions have the potential to affect areas of concern to practitioners of traditional religions. In the RMP area, that consultation will require contact with the Blackfeet, Rocky Boys and Fort Belknap Reservations. The activities of concern are those which might cause degradation to the visual or aesthetic nature of an area, or cause loss of plant species or other resources important to Native Americans.



## Recreation Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will maintain the recreational quality of public lands by providing opportunities for fishing, hunting, sightseeing, hiking, snow sports and other outdoor opportunities.

The BLM will maintain and enhance the recreational and visual quality of public lands along river systems in the planning area.

The wilderness values in three identified wilderness study areas (WSA) Stafford, Ervin Ridge, and Cow Creek will be maintained. The Secretary of the Interior is required to report his recommendations for Sec. 603 and suitable Sec. 202 WSAs to the President by October 21, 1991, and the President is required to report his recommendations to Congress by October 21, 1993. Congress ultimately decides whether to designate study areas, or portions of study areas as wilderness. Any non-suitable Sec. 202 WSAs may be dropped from further consideration by a Record of Decision issued by the State Director.

The quality of the scenic (visual) values on public lands throughout the RMP area will be maintained following visual resource management (VRM) guidance.

The Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River will be managed to protect and preserve the remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, and other values as directed by Congress in the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* (PL 90-1968) and the amendment for

the Upper Missouri (PL 94-486, 1976). *The BLM will continue to coordinate its management responsibility for the UMNWSR with the National Park Service's (NPS) Rocky Mountain Regional Office, which oversees all wild and scenic rivers and with the NPS's Mid-west Regional Office in managing the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The BLM will manage the segment of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail within the planning area, in a manner that is consistent with the purposes and provisions of Public Law 90-543 (the National Trail Act) as amended by Public Law 95-265 and the comprehensive plan prepared by the NPS in 1982. The BLM will manage the segment of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail within the planning area in a manner consistent with the purposes and provisions of Public Law 90-543, as amended by Public Law 99-445 and the comprehensive plan being prepared by the USFS.*

## Implementation

The BLM will provide recreation access maps and brochures for recreational use of the public lands and to promote better sportsman/landowner relations.

The BLM will strive to improve public access to rivers at road and highway intersections and to acquire lands to enhance recreational opportunities. Other developments may be allowed, based on public demand and BLM recreational studies. Management priority will be on the Missouri and Marias Rivers.

Roads, trails and public lands will be signed *where necessary and appropriate*, to aid people recreating on public lands. Priority will be given to *areas of intensive use*.

Recreational use studies will be conducted on a continual basis to determine *areas of intensive use* and future access needs.

A pack in/pack out policy at recreation sites will be implemented.

All acquired lands will be evaluated for wilderness values as part of the lands review process.

*The Sec. 603 wilderness study areas (Cow Creek and Ervin Ridge) will continue to be managed in compliance with the Interim Management Policy (IMP) until they are reviewed and acted upon by Congress. The non-suitable Sec. 202 WSA (Stafford) will be managed under the Interim Management Policy until a Record of Decision from the Missouri Breaks Wilderness EIS is issued by the Montana BLM State Director. After the 202 decision is issued, the management prescriptions and objectives applicable to the contiguous non-wilderness land, as identified in this RMP, will apply to this WSA.*

Acquired areas studied for wilderness will be managed to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the land, and when it does not conflict with valid and existing rights, they will be managed to meet the non-impairment standard as well.

The final Missouri Breaks EIS recommended 21,590 acres of the 34,050 acre Cow Creek WSA as suitable for wilderness designation. Of this 21,590 acre suitable portion, 10,500 are within the RMP planning area. None of the 4,800 acre Stafford WSA or 10,200-acre Ervin Ridge WSA were recommended as suitable. More information on these WSAs can be found in Appendix 2.8 and the final Missouri Breaks Wilderness EIS (December 1987).



WSAs added to the National Wilderness Preservation System by Congress will be managed in compliance with the Wilderness Management Policy. Site-specific wilderness management plans will be developed for *these* WSAs.

*Those* WSAs reviewed by Congress, but not added to the National Wilderness Preservation System will be managed under the applicable guidelines in this Resource Management Plan.

Surface developments will be designed or mitigated to complement and harmonize with the natural features and the Visual Resource Management Class objectives. The visual contrast rating will be used as a guide for all major projects proposed on public lands that fall within VRM Classes I, II, and III areas which have high sensitivity levels.

Existing VRM data will be updated for the Missouri Breaks Grazing EIS portion of the planning area.

### Implementation Within the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (Recreation Related)

*BLM will revise and update the Coordinated Resource Activity Management Plan known as the Upper Missouri National Wild & Scenic River Plan, to implement the guidance provided by this RMP.* The BLM will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on bankside recreation use and management within the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge boundaries, *between* river miles 139-149.

In Class I VRM areas (wild sections of the UMNWSR Corridor) the level of change to the natural landscape from management activities should be very low and must not attract attention.

In the scenic and recreational sections of the UMNWSR Corridor (Class II VRM areas), management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer.

Both motorized and non-motorized watercraft will be permitted in all river segments. There is a no-wake speed limitation during the primary recreation use season for the wild and scenic river segments. A no-wake speed is defined as the speed whereby there is no whitewater in the *wake* of the vessel or in created waves immediate to the vessel.

## Hazardous Waste Management

The BLM would not permit the establishment of a hazardous waste dump on public lands under any of the alternatives.

### Implementation

*Lands needed for the disposal of hazardous wastes will be identified and made available through sale or exchange to the private sector for this purpose.*

## Land Resource Management

Under all alternatives the BLM will continue to identify areas with legal access and those areas lacking legal access. Access will then be addressed in an activity plan that will identify specific tracts or routes for acquisition. Acquisition needs will be identified by individual program activities and public involvement. Access needs identified at this time, for administrative purposes, include the Kevin Rim area, the Sweet Grass Hills and the Marias River.

The BLM will continue withdrawal review as provided for under *the* Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and Department Manual 603.

BLM will take aggressive action on any unauthorized agricultural use of public lands. Emphasis will be on detection/resolution and publication of the results of those activities. Inventories of unauthorized agricultural use will be initiated and completed, where not already current. A plan for abatement will be a priority in the future budget developments. Emphasis will be given to immediate resolution of newly identified unauthorized uses; termination or authorization, as appropriate. Administrative processes will seek fair-market value land use compensation, damages and/or land restoration.

### Implementation

A transportation plan will be updated to identify existing legal access to public lands as well as areas where public access is lacking. Access will then be addressed in an activity plan that will identify specific tracts or routes for acquisition. Acquisition needs will be identified by individual program activities and through public involvement.

Access will be obtained to provide more recreation in the recreational and scenic portions of the UMNWSR Corridor. Priority will be given to: Evans Bend at river mile 6; launch/takeout sites; Black Bluff Rapids; and bankside use areas. Other access will be obtained as needed. The only new *motorized* access allowed in the wild portions of the UMNWSR Corridor will be to provide required access by a *claimant* to valid, existing leases. *Non-motorized access will continue to be pursued.*

The BLM recommends revoking the power site classification and power site reserve number 757. These power site classifications and reserves are within the UMNWSR where legislative actions preclude water power and water storage development. Other power site classifications and power site reserves will be reviewed to determine if the withdrawals are still valid.

If a withdrawal (including power site withdrawals) is terminated, the lands will be assessed for retention or disposal *qualities using the guidance provided in Appendix 1.1 of this document.* If these lands are retained, they will be managed under the guidance provided for the surrounding or nearby lands or for the specific values on the lands.

Distribution facilities (electrical systems, pipelines, roads, railroads, etc.) will be encouraged *within a 1-mile corridor along existing facilities where appropriate.*

Land acquisition will be for lands of *equal or greater* resource values than those lands disposed of. Acquired lands will be placed under the guidance found in this Resource Management Plan. Lands acquired through fee simple title or easement in a designated emphasis area (i.e., the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Corridor, WSAs, ACECs) will be managed under the specific management guidance for the area. *ACEC boundary changes, necessitated by land-resource acquisition, would occur to clearly define the emphasis area limits.*

*Before the acquisition of private or state land and the disposal of public land, the criteria in Appendix 1.1 would be applied. A land report (Environmental Analysis, Notice of Realty Action) would be written for each disposal action. A land report for a sale would have to show how the FLPMA Sec. 203(a)(1) sale criteria applies. A land report for an exchange would have to show how the public interest is benefited as required by FLPMA.*

## ALTERNATIVES

This section describes four different alternatives *designed* to resolve the issues discussed in Chapter 1. Alternative A represents the No Action or Continuing Current Management Alternative; Alternative B presents a combination of management guidance and actions that favors the use of public land resources; Alternative C presents a combination of management guidance and actions favoring the protection and preservation of public land resources; and Alternative D presents a balance of management guidance and actions *described* in the previous three alternatives.

These alternatives were developed as reasonable combinations of resource uses and management practices to respond to the planning issues. Each alternative, combined with the Management Common to All Alternatives guidance *would* provide management direction for all resources.

Maps showing allocation differences between the alternatives for land tenure adjustment, ORV management and ROW location are located in the back of this document. Map 1 *identifies* surface land status and the minerals overlay for it identifies federal subsurface and constraints to minerals management. Map 2 and the attached table show the land tenure adjustments for Alternative A. Map 3 shows the land tenure adjustments for Alternatives B, C and D. Map 4 *used in combination with the table printed on it* shows the ORV management options and ROW locations for all the alternatives. Map 1, the minerals overlay and Map 2 along with Maps 3 and 4 are found in the draft RMP EIS. Maps 3 and 4 have been updated and reprinted in this document.



## ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)

This alternative represents a continuation of present management direction. It would continue to implement policies, regulations, and decisions from five management framework plans, several grazing environmental impact statements a wilderness EIS, various programmatic environmental assessments, activity plans, and the State Director's Guidance for *Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment* (1984). This alternative serves as a baseline for the comparison of other alternatives. If selected, this alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common To All Alternatives section would form the RMP.

### Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would continue to *use* the State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment (see Appendix 1.1) *to exchange, sell and acquire lands*. A total of 44,143 acres are currently identified for disposal, with an emphasis on exchange. The emphasis of this guidance *would be* to attain a land pattern conducive to ease of management or optimum utilization of resources. This is generally achieved through managing large blocks of public surface lands. Land adjustment actions would generally dispose of lands outside the retention areas identified on Map 2 in the back of the draft RMP *however*, land exchanges may be considered within the retention areas. Acquisition lands would *have to* meet the criteria found in Appendix 1.1.

### Implementation

Land adjustment would be achieved through state and private exchange, *donation, purchase under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF), the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP), public land sale*, and mineral exchanges. A land report EA would be completed for each action.

Acquisition tracts would generally be in areas of major federal holdings such as the Missouri River Corridor, northern Blaine County, the Sweet Grass Hills and other areas within and outside of the planning area.

### Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would continue to allow unrestricted off-road vehicle (ORV) use under an open designation for the majority of the planning area (477,763 acres). Map 4 in the back of this document *shows* this open area.

ORV use would continue to be limited to existing roads, trails and vehicular ways in the wilderness study areas. Under the limited designation, ORVs would *also* be restricted to existing roads and trails in areas of sedimentary breaks soils with slopes greater than 30%. Combined, these areas total 148,335 acres.

ORV restrictions *provide* for administrative access to leases (grazing, mineral or other). Such access would be granted on a case-by-case basis.



## Implementation

An ORV implementation plan would be completed. This plan would contain detailed information on roads, *vehicular ways*, and trails open to travel in *limited areas*, on signing the area, and on monitoring use in the area. The BLM would publish and distribute a map of the limited areas *showing* the roads and trails open for use. All limited areas would be signed with an explanation of use restrictions.

Wilderness study areas designated wilderness by Congress would be closed to all vehicular traffic at the time of designation, *except for administrative access as defined in the Wilderness Act*. A portion of the Cow Creek WSA is currently recommended as preliminarily suitable for designation. WSAs which are not designated would be managed under the ORV constraints of adjacent lands, if any apply.

The BLM would acquire access to intensively used ORV areas through exchange, easement or purchase.

*The BLM would monitor and enforce all designations once ORV implementation plans are completed.*

## Right-of-Way Location

The BLM would continue to consider authorization of lineal rights-of-way throughout the planning area, if an environmental review of each request indicates the impacts may be mitigated.

The entire planning area would remain open to communication site location.

## Implementation

An environmental analysis of *any* proposed project would identify stipulations necessary to mitigate impacts to resources. Standard stipulations (see Appendix 2.6) would be used as minimum stipulations.

## Emphasis Areas

Current management practices and allocations would continue in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas. All three areas would be managed for the multiple use of all resources with no additional stipulations, unless needed on a site specific basis to *mitigate impacts to resources*.

## Kevin Rim Implementation

Standard protective stipulations (see Appendices 2.2 and 2.6) would continue to mitigate surface disturbing activities (primarily oil and gas) and related impacts to the raptor and cultural resources. *The standard raptor protection stipulations (see Appendix 2.2) would be applied to the active nests of raptors listed as either T&E or sensitive and would not permit disturbance within 1/4-mile of an active nest. This stipulation would be applied at the APD review stage, if an active nest is found on the lease.* Dates during which raptor nests are generally active can be found in Table 3 of the *Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines* (see Appendix 2.2).

The BLM would continue to require a cultural resource inventory on all surface disturbing projects prior to approval. If cultural resources are discovered, the project would avoid them if possible, or the impacts would be mitigated. Mitigation may involve archaeological excavation.

The BLM would continue to permit rights-of-way in the area if an environmental analysis determines the project can be completed without significant impacts. This determination *would be made after the environmental analysis develops* mitigation measures *designed* to modify the impacts.

## Sweet Grass Hills Implementation

The BLM would continue to lease and permit oil and gas exploration and development under the standard stipulations (see Appendix 2.2). *These stipulations protect active raptor nests, crucial elk wintering and calving areas and cultural resources. Currently, the primary disturbance is from oil and gas activity. These stipulations would be applied to the active nests of raptors listed as either T&E or sensitive (see Appendix 2.2) and would not permit disturbance within 1/4-mile of an active nest. This stipulation would be applied at the APD review stage, if an active nest is found on the lease. If the lease is located on crucial wildlife or elk calving areas, seasonal no surface occupancy stipulations may be applied at APD time.*

*The area would remain open to operation under the mining laws.* Protective wildlife stipulations may be applied to locatable mineral development *when* they are needed to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation.

The standard cultural stipulations (see Appendix 2.6) would also apply to the area.

The BLM would consult with Native American tribes on actions which might impact the area.

The current grazing methods would continue, unless altered by the Great Falls Monitoring Plan.

The BLM has reviewed the East Butte, Bureau of Reclamation (BR) withdrawal (569.67 acres) and recommended that 40 acres of the withdrawal be retained and the remaining 529.67 acres returned to BLM administration. The withdrawal was originally granted as a riprap source for reclamation projects. The 40 acres still needed by BR are adjacent to the existing quarry and provide riprap reserves that may be needed in the future. The area revoked from the withdrawal would be opened to mineral entry and would be managed under the management guidance for the area. All other agency withdrawals in the area would be continued.

## Cow Creek Implementation

Multiple use management would continue in the Cow Creek area. The BLM in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, would write an activity plan for the Nez Perce National Historic Trail; *16 miles of which are located on public land within the planning area.* Minor modifications of the current grazing methods would occur in order to incorporate the riparian guidelines necessary to maintain current riparian areas on Cow Creek.

Surface disturbing activities such as mineral development, right-of-way location and/or range improvements would be subject to the standard stipulations (see Appendices 2.2 and 2.6).

## Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

BLM manages the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River and its related resources in a manner consistent with providing a meaningful recreational experience for recreational users, while maintaining or enhancing the existing unique quality environment of the management area.

Recreation use including, but not limited to boating, hiking, fishing, and hunting, *would* be permitted to the extent that the wild and scenic characteristics of the Missouri River are not degraded.

BLM management would be consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542 1968) and the amendment which designated the Upper Missouri River (PL 94-486, 1976).

### Visitor Services Implementation

Floater user capacity is based on the amount of public land available for campsites and would remain the same. *No user capacity has been established between Fort Benton and Coal Banks.* The use capacity is 210 individuals/day between Coal Banks and Judith Landing, and is 234 individuals/day between Judith Landing and Fred Robinson Bridge. Minor adjustments would be made if additional, suitable land is acquired. Outfitters *would* be limited to 30% of the overall carrying capacity (133 individuals/day).

The visitor contact station in Fort Benton and the ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would be operated between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The visitor contact station would be managed under the Memorandum of Understanding with the National Park Service, *or as future legislation may dictate*, to provide visitors with necessary permits and safety information. In addition, the center would provide interpretive information on the natural and cultural history of the river. The ranger stations would provide visitor permits and information and serve as public health and safety contact sites.

All interpretive activities and sites within the river corridor *would* be self guided and keyed to the Floater's Guide. The Floater's Guide increases visitor understanding of river use regulations and the resources present on the river. It provides information on the natural, cultural, historical and geological features of the river. Information or interpretive signs, except hazard warnings visible from the Missouri River, *would* be prohibited on all federal lands within the wild and scenic segments.

Recreational use of islands would be discouraged, through visitor contact and publications, during the spring and early summer season to protect young wildlife.

### Facility Management Implementation

Three categories of recreation sites exist along the river. Undeveloped sites are primitive camping areas used on a regular basis, but lacking capital improvements (i.e., pit toilets). Semi-developed campsites are areas with some capital improvements and camping use is fairly frequent, *but do not qualify for fee collection under the Land and Water Conservation Act (L&WCF) of 1965.* Developed sites

are those areas with tent or trailer spaces, potable water, access roads, refuse containers, pit or chemical toilets and qualify for fee collection under the L&WCF. These definitions are applicable to all alternatives.

The BLM would continue monitoring and maintenance (i.e., *garbage* collection) on major undeveloped use sites. Those sites along the recreational segment *from Fort Benton* to Coal Banks Landing would be signed to help alleviate trespass problems on private lands.

The existing semi-developed sites would be maintained and additional *semi-developed* sites may be provided based on the following criteria—

- (1) increasing use of the river or of undeveloped campsites;
- (2) impacts to soil and vegetation becoming long term; (i.e., heavy use begins to compact soils and kill vegetation beyond acceptable limits) as determined by monitoring;
- (3) sanitation becomes a health problem;
- (4) more or different sites are needed in order to rest existing sites (to reclaim soils and vegetation at existing sites); and/or
- (5) better distribution of use is desired in the more popular areas. Development at these sites *would* be limited to pit or chemical toilets and potable water sources *as these sites would* be developed and maintained to provide a primitive recreational experience.

Developed sites as defined above, would only be allowed at major launch/take out sites in the recreational segments.

The BLM would continue to manage the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department campgrounds, as provided under agreement with the State of Montana. This includes facilities at Coal Banks Landing, Hole-In-The-Wall, Slaughter River, Judith Landing and Cow Island Landing.

### Private Sector Initiatives Implementation

*Under this alternative, private sector initiatives would be limited to outfitting, guiding and boat rentals. Developments associated with these initiatives would be restricted to the recreational and scenic river segments. All developments would be consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended, and the guidance selected in this RMP.*

*The recreational segment definition in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act allows for the most development potential. If there is a need established for some type of facility, whether it be BLM or private sector initiative, the merits and economic feasibility would be assessed under the guidance provided in the wild and scenic river legislation, this RMP, and the river coordinated Activity Plan.*

*Private sector initiatives would be managed under the guidance of this RMP.*

### Health and Safety Implementation

The BLM would continue visitor services to provide for public health and safety. All law enforcement and search and rescue operations would continue as a cooperative effort. Local and state agencies *would* have lead responsibility, while BLM could provide personnel and equipment *as requested.*



## ALTERNATIVE B

This alternative emphasizes the availability of public land for consumptive uses with minimum restrictions. The non-consumptive resources (cultural, soil, water, air, threatened and endangered species, vegetation, etc.) would be provided the minimum protection required by law. This alternative would generally provide the opportunity for the maximum allowable levels for resource use, exploration, development and production. If selected, this alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common To All Alternatives section would form the RMP.

### Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would attain an economical and manageable public land base. Isolated, uneconomical, or marginally important resource lands would be available for disposal. Acquisition of private and state lands would be pursued to consolidate public lands into large blocks. *A total of 15,689 acres of public land would be identified for disposal with an emphasis on exchange. These lands meet FLPMA Section 203(a)(1) sale criteria and are listed in Appendix 1.2, List 1. An additional 34,428 acres of public land would be identified for disposal and are listed in Appendix 1.2, List 2. These lands have not been field inventoried, however, this alternative assumes that after a field inventory occurs, the lands would meet FLPMA Section 203(a)(1) sale criteria.* Federal subsurface could be exchanged or sold for fair market value.

The State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment (USDI-BLM 1984) is being revised by this alternative for the planning area only. The criteria presented in the State Director's Guidance has been applied to the lands in the RAs and the criteria applicable to each resource area can be found in Appendix 1.1. As a result of evaluating the lands in the planning area against the criteria, the map presented in the State Director's Guidance no longer applies to the planning area; it is replaced by Map 3 of this document.

### Implementation

*The preferred method of disposal would be through exchange. The management objective for disposing of the exchange lands identified in Appendix 1.2 would be to allow the acquisition of areas in the Sweet Grass Hills, Kevin Rim, Marias River Corridor, Missouri River Corridor, Cow Creek area, the Rocky Mountain Front, and important wildlife habitat areas. The order of these areas has no bearing on priority of acquisition.*

### Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would maximize opportunities to use off-road vehicles within the planning area. Travel in wilderness study areas (32,000 acres) would be limited to existing roads, trails and vehicular ways. However, the BLM could issue permits for cross country travel for administrative vehicular use in these restricted areas. The remainder of the planning area (594,098 acres) would be open to off-road travel. The BLM would identify about 640 acres of this open designation area for intensive off-road vehicle use.

### Implementation

The BLM would prepare an ORV implementation plan containing detailed information on open and limited areas, the intensive use area, and on signing and monitoring of ORV use.

Travel would be limited to existing roads, trails and vehicular ways in WSAs which would be identified on maps available to the public. Areas designated as limited and the intensive use area, would be signed with an explanation of allowed uses.

Wilderness study areas designated wilderness by Congress would be closed to all vehicular traffic at the time of designation, except for administrative access as defined in the Wilderness Act. A portion of the Cow Creek WSA is currently recommended as preliminarily suitable for designation. *ORV use on WSAs not designated wilderness, or on acquired lands, would be consistent with adjacent lands.*

Any intensive ORV use area must meet the following criteria prior to designation—

- (1) the area would be at least 5 miles from an emphasis area;
- (2) the area should not be located in a Class I or II VRM area, especially in areas receiving high recreational use;
- (3) the area would be located on public land with a buffer of public land to reduce conflicts with private landowners;
- (4) the area would have good public access or the capability for such access;
- (5) areas with open mine shafts and other hazards would not be considered for ORV use;
- (6) the area should avoid reservoirs, watersheds of important reservoirs, floodplains, stream channels, wetlands and riparian zones;
- (7) the area would contain suitable topography and soil conditions to maximize ORV user's enjoyment and reduce health and safety risks (i.e., steep, but not too steep, few surface rocks, non-flooding areas);
- (8) area would be located 1/4-mile from raptor nest sites 1½-miles from known grouse leks; 1/2-mile from known bald eagle nests and 1-mile from known peregrine falcon nests;
- (9) use of crucial wildlife ranges would not be allowed May 1-June 30;

The BLM would acquire access, as needed, into intensive use areas through exchange, easement or purchase.

*The BLM would monitor and enforce all designations once ORV implementation plans are completed.*

### Right-of-Way Location

*Nationally designated special management areas (i.e., the UMNWSR) would be considered transmission facility avoidance areas. However, the remainder of the planning area would remain open to such facilities.*

The entire planning area would remain open to communication site location.

## Implementation

Lineal rights-of-way would be permitted in the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Corridor at the following locations: mile 0-1, mile 20-21, mile 38.5-39.5, mile 88-89, mile 101-103, mile 131.5-132.5 and mile 148.5-149.5 (see Map 4 in the back of this document). The remainder of the corridor would be an avoidance area.

ROWs proposed through WSAs would have to meet the non-impairment criteria. WSAs designated wilderness by Congress, would become exclusion areas for lineal ROW location. If other areas are designated by Congress, they would become ROW exclusion areas; if possible, corridors would be designated through them.

BLM would evaluate each ROW request through an environmental assessment and develop the mitigation required by law to protect various resources (i.e., threatened and endangered species, cultural artifacts).

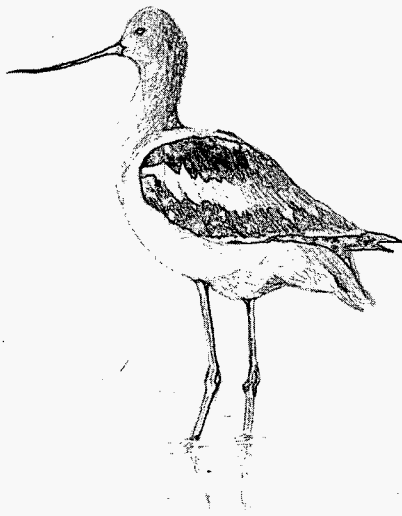
## Emphasis Areas

Current management practices and allocations would continue in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas. All three areas would be managed for the multiple use of all resources with no additional stipulations.

*The BLM has reviewed the East Butte, Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal (569.67 acres) and recommended that 40 acres of the withdrawal be retained and the remaining 529.67 acres returned to BLM administration. The withdrawal was originally granted as a riprap source for reclamation projects. The 40 acres still needed by BR are adjacent to the existing quarry and provide riprap reserves that may be needed in the future. The area revoked from the withdrawal would be opened to mineral entry and would be managed under the management guidance for the area.*

## Implementation

Please refer to the implementation section for Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, and Cow Creek in Alternative A.



## Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

The BLM would maximize the full range of land and water based recreation opportunities in all segments of the river corridor, consistent with the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* (PL 90-542, 1968) and the amendment for the Upper Missouri (PL 94-486, 1976). Visitor center contact services would be provided consistent with the MOU with National Park Service or future legislation. This may be accomplished through the use of private sector initiatives to provide a full range of visitor services.

## Visitor Services Implementation

The BLM would not set floater capacity limits nor would outfitters be limited on either the number of people or boats.

The visitor contact station at Fort Benton and the ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would be operated for a 6-month season as necessary and as funding levels permit. The season would begin the weekend before Memorial Day and end Thanksgiving weekend. The visitor contact station would provide visitors with the necessary permits and safety information for their float. In addition, the center would provide information on the natural and cultural history of the river. The ranger stations would provide visitor permits and information and serve as public health and safety contact sites.

Interpretive trails and sites would be developed at appropriate geological, historical, archaeological, paleontological and natural area sites. These developments may include interpretive signs or displays. Appropriate sites currently identified include the Stafford Ferry, Cow Creek, Evans Bend, Steamboat Point, Little Sandy, and Hole-In-The-Wall. Other sites may be developed if there is substantial public use, the BLM acquires important new lands, or major new resource discoveries are made.

Islands would be available for recreational uses.

## Facility Management Implementation

The BLM would clear brush (1/4-acre) for pathways and tenting areas at all undeveloped sites. All such areas would be signed in the recreational and scenic sections of the river. All sites including those in the wild portions would be shown on the river maps. These sites would be upgraded to semi-developed sites thorough the life of the plan (10-15 years).

Semi-developed sites would be maintained and additional sites may be developed in all sections of the river based on the following criteria—

- (1) increasing use of the river or of undeveloped campsites;
- (2) impacts to soil and vegetation becoming long term; i.e., heavy use begins to compact soils and kill vegetation as determined by monitoring;
- (3) sanitation becomes a health problem;
- (4) additional sites are needed to rest existing campsites; and/or
- (5) better distribution of campsites is needed.



Development at these sites would be constrained by the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended*. If access is required for capital improvements, the following restrictions would apply: in wild sections of the UMNWSR, roads not needed for administrative purposes would be closed, contoured to a natural appearance and seeded with a native species; in scenic sections, use would be limited to administrative purposes; and standard stipulations (see Appendix 2.6) would be applied to developments in the recreational segments.

*Developed sites would be established and managed based on demand and economic feasibility.* These developments would be allowed in the recreational and scenic sections of the river corridor and would be subject to restrictions in the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended*. These developments may include boat liveries, lodging facilities, interpretive services, eating facilities, etc.

The BLM would not acquire or manage existing state camping facilities (six sites).

### ***Private Sector Initiatives Implementation***

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives to help *maximize recreational use* on the river. These ventures would range from operating and maintaining sites to full scale developments offering boat rentals, lodging and eating facilities.

*Private sector initiatives* would be managed within the constraints of the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended*, and under the guidance in this RMP. Failure to comply would cause *revocation* of the operators permit.

*The recreational segment definition in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act allows for the most development potential. If there is a need established for some type of facility, whether it be BLM or private sector initiative, the merits and economic feasibility would be assessed under the guidance provided in the applicable wild and scenic river legislation, this RMP, and the Coordinated River Activity Plan.*

### ***Health and Safety Implementation***

Law enforcement would be contracted to the local sheriff's department.

Search and rescue operations would be coordinated and provided by local authorities.



## ALTERNATIVE C

The management guidance in this alternative emphasizes the protection of natural and cultural resources. Other public land uses would be constrained by stipulations and/or mitigation developed to provide protection and enhancement of non-consumptive resources (recreation, soil, water and air), the natural resources (wildlife, vegetation, etc.) and cultural resources. If selected, this alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common To All Alternatives section would form the RMP.

### Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would emphasize the retention of public lands. A total of 15,689 acres of public land would be identified for disposal with an emphasis on exchange. These lands meet FLPMA Section 203(a)(1) sale criteria and are listed in Appendix 1.2, List 1. The remainder of the lands in the planning area would be retained. The lands listed in Appendix 1.2, List 2, have not been field inventoried and it is assumed they do not meet FLPMA Section 203(a)(1) sale criteria and would be retained.

The State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment (USDI-BLM 1984) is being revised by this alternative for the planning area only. The criteria presented in the State Director's Guidance has been refined and applied to the lands in the resource areas (see Appendix 1.1). As a result of evaluating the lands in the planning area against the criteria, the map presented in the State Director's Guidance no longer applies to the planning area; it is replaced by Map 3 in the back of this document.

### Implementation

The preferred method of disposal would be through state and private exchanges. The management objective for disposing of the exchange lands would be to acquire lands in specially managed areas (i.e., UMNWSR, WSA, ACECs, national historic trails areas, etc.) and in high value resource areas (i.e., crucial big game wintering and calving/fawning areas, threatened or endangered species habitat, important cultural sites, etc.). Current areas of interest are (no priority) along the Missouri and Marias Rivers, along Cow Creek, north Blaine County and the Sweet Grass Hills. All acquisitions would meet the criteria listed in Appendix 1.1.

### Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would provide maximum protection to the physical and biological environment to reduce, to the fullest extent possible, the negative impacts from off-road vehicles.

ORV use in the following areas would be limited to designated roads and trails: WSAs, the UMNWSR Corridor, the Cow Creek ACEC, the Kevin Rim ACEC, the Sweet Grass Hills ACEC, areas of sedimentary breaks type soils and riparian areas (a total of 329,794 acres). Restrictions developed for these areas would be applied yearlong. In addition there would be no travel on roads and trails in sedimentary breaks type soils when they are wet. Seasonal restrictions requiring vehicles to use existing roads and trails would be placed on important wildlife habitat areas (99,000 acres). A

total of 428,794 acres would be limited yearlong or seasonally to ORV use. The Gist Road between the cabins and the Missouri River (5 acres) would be closed to vehicular use. The remainder of the planning area (197,299 acres) would remain open to ORV use.

### Implementation

The BLM would conduct an intensive road and trail inventory in the areas mentioned above. An ORV implementation plan would be written to identify designated roads and trails and plan the closure of unnecessary roads in limited areas. In areas limited to existing roads and trails (including seasonally restricted areas) the implementation plan would identify those roads and trails. All implementation plans would contain details for signing and monitoring designated areas. Maps of the designated areas would be published. Table 2.3 identifies seasonal restrictions which would apply to important wildlife areas.

TABLE 2.3  
SEASONAL ORV RESTRICTIONS<sup>1</sup>

Deer/elk winter range	December 1 - March 15
Deer/elk fawning and calving areas	May 1 - June 30
Antelope winter range	December 1 - February 28
Raptor nesting areas	February 1 - August 15
Grouse nesting areas	April 1 - June 30

<sup>1</sup>BLM, 1987

Wilderness study areas designated wilderness by Congress would be closed to all vehicular traffic at the time of designation, except for administrative access, as defined in the Wilderness Act. A portion of the Cow Creek WSA is currently recommended as preliminarily suitable for designation. ORV use in areas dropped from consideration as wilderness, or on acquired lands, would be consistent with adjacent lands.

Permits could be issued for vehicular use in limited and closed areas for administrative purposes on a case-by-case basis.

The BLM would publish maps of the restricted areas and erect signs explaining the restrictions. The BLM would monitor and enforce all designations once implementation plans are completed.

### Right-of-Way Location

The BLM would protect important natural and cultural resources and special management areas by designating those areas as avoidance or exclusion areas for the location of lineal rights-of-way. The Kevin Rim and the UMNWSR would be exclusion areas. WSAs, ACECs, areas of sedimentary breaks soil and riparian areas would be designated avoidance areas.

New requests for communication site location would be encouraged to locate with existing facilities. The BLM would not permit communication sites on the Middle and West Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills.



## Implementation

Table 2.4 identifies the areas within the UMNWSR corridor where BLM would allow ROW location.

TABLE 2.4

### RIGHT-OF-WAY WINDOWS IN THE UPPER MISSOURI NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER CORRIDOR<sup>1</sup>

River Mile 0	to River Mile 1
River Mile 20	to River Mile 21
River Mile 38.5	to River Mile 39.5
River Mile 88	to River Mile 89
River Mile 101	to River Mile 103
River Mile 131.5	to River Mile 132.5
River Mile 148.5	to River Mile 149.5

<sup>1</sup>BLM, 1987

<sup>2</sup> River miles are identified on map 4 in the back of this document. River mile 0 is located at Ft. Benton. River mile 149.5 is marked by the Fred Robinson Bridge.

No new ROWs would be issued off the east side of Kevin Rim. Once industry relinquishes existing ROWs off the east side, new facilities would not be authorized in their place. The BLM would avoid location of ROWs in all WSAs; the Cow Creek ACEC; the Sweet Grass Hills ACEC; riparian areas; and sedimentary breaks type soils, unless the disturbed area would be restored to its predisturbance condition within 2 years. These areas coincide closely with the restricted ORV use areas shown on Map 4 in the back of this document.

Any area designated wilderness by Congress would be a ROW exclusion area. Areas dropped from consideration as wilderness would be open to ROW location, unless they fall into the avoidance category because of soils, riparian areas or other resource considerations.

Every ROW grant request would be subject to environmental review and stipulations and mitigation measures would be developed to ensure rehabilitation of the area.

## Emphasis Areas

The BLM would provide maximum protection of the significant resources in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, and Cow Creek areas (see Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4).

The Kevin Rim would be designated an ACEC to provide protection, maintenance and/or enhancement to the peregrine falcon habitat, other sensitive raptor habitat, and cultural resources while providing for continued oil and gas development.

The East, Middle and West Buttes, of the Sweet Grass Hills, would be designated an ACEC to protect and maintain the area for Native American religious and cultural practices, public recreation and wildlife habitat. A protective mineral withdrawal would be pursued for this ACEC.

The Cow Creek area would be designated an ACEC to protect, maintain and/or enhance the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, Cow Island Trail, and other resources in the area.

## Kevin Rim Implementation

The BLM would use the following guidance to prepare an activity plan detailing specific management of the area. The Rocky Mountain Front (RMF) Raptor Guidelines (Appendix 2.2) would be used to develop site-specific mitigation for activities in occupied raptor habitat. These guidelines would be used to implement a special stipulation to be applied to new leases in occupied raptor habitat (see Appendix 2.2). However, the raptor guidelines would only be applied, as necessary, on a site-specific basis at the time an APD is submitted and restrictions may be waived by the authorized officer at the production phase.

The BLM would work with operators to apply necessary guidelines to any new activity on existing leases which threatens to disrupt the nesting and rearing cycles of sensitive or T&E raptor species using Kevin Rim. These guidelines would be used to implement a special stipulation on all new oil and gas leases in the raptor habitat area (see Appendix 2.2).

The BLM would inventory the Kevin Rim area for cultural resources. Based on this survey and/or additional surveys the BLM would not authorize projects within 1/4-mile of the base of the Kevin Rim escarpment unless impacts to the cultural resources could be mitigated.

BLM would encourage ROW location off the west side of Kevin Rim. The BLM would not authorize new ROWs off the escarpment (east side). If existing east side facilities are relinquished by industry, new facilities on the east side would not be authorized in their place.

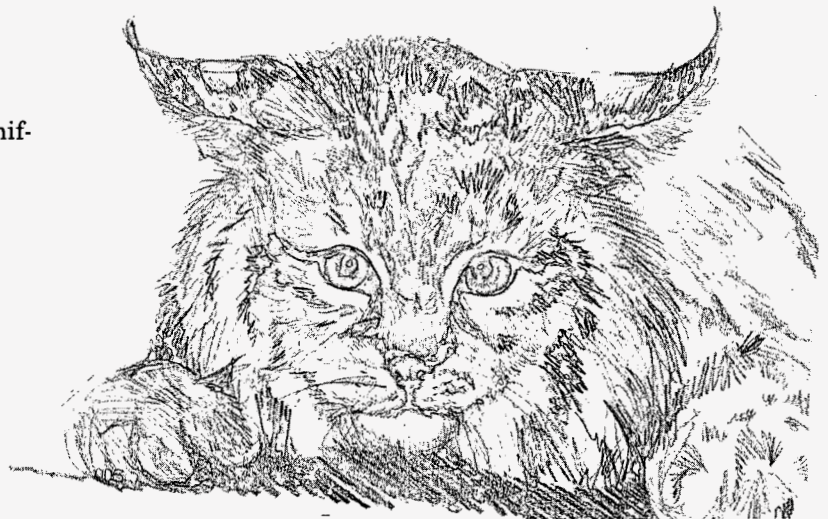


Figure 2.2 Kevin Rim Emphasis Area — Surface Ownership Map.

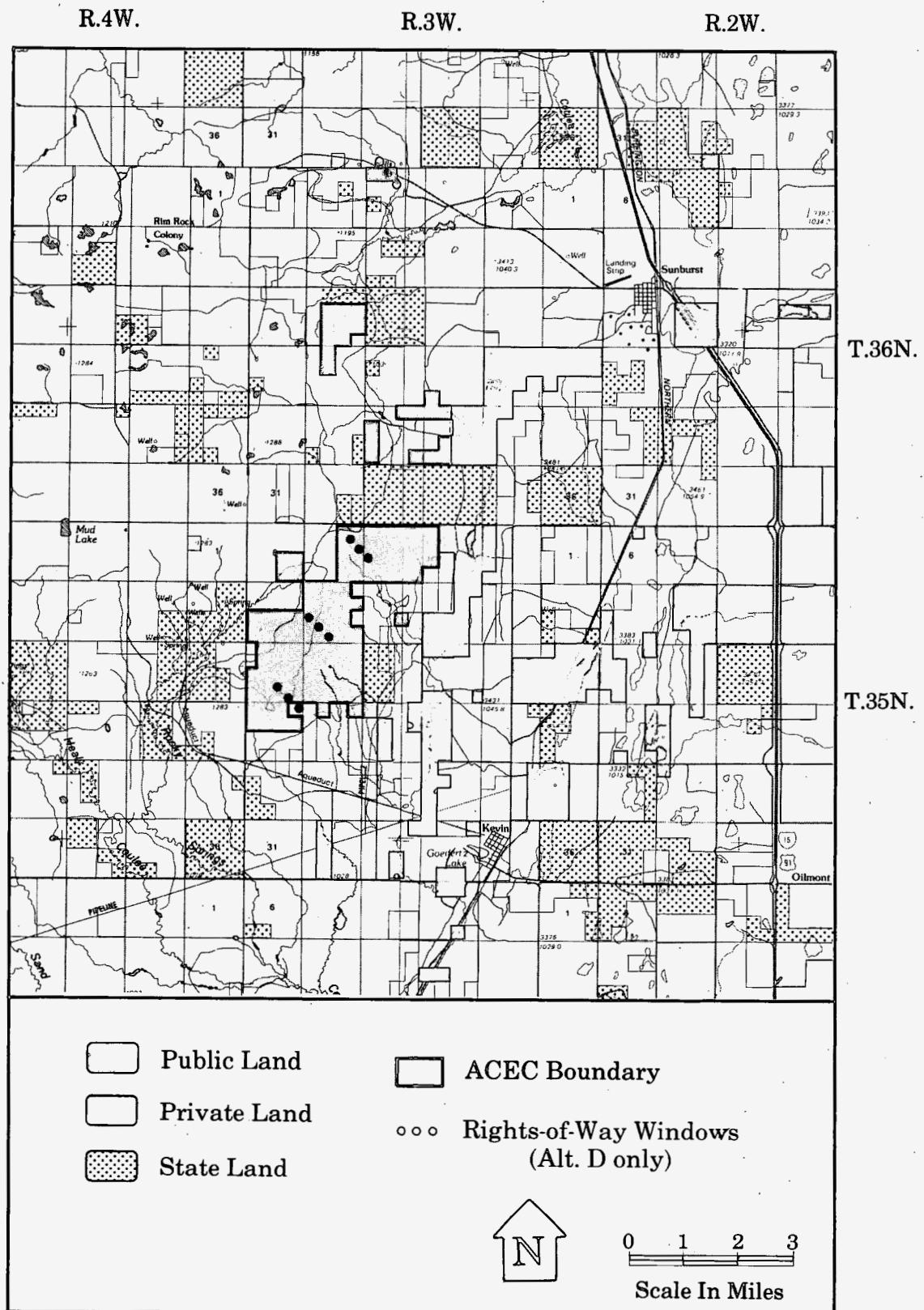


Figure 2.3 Sweet Grass Hills Emphasis Area — Surface Ownership Map.

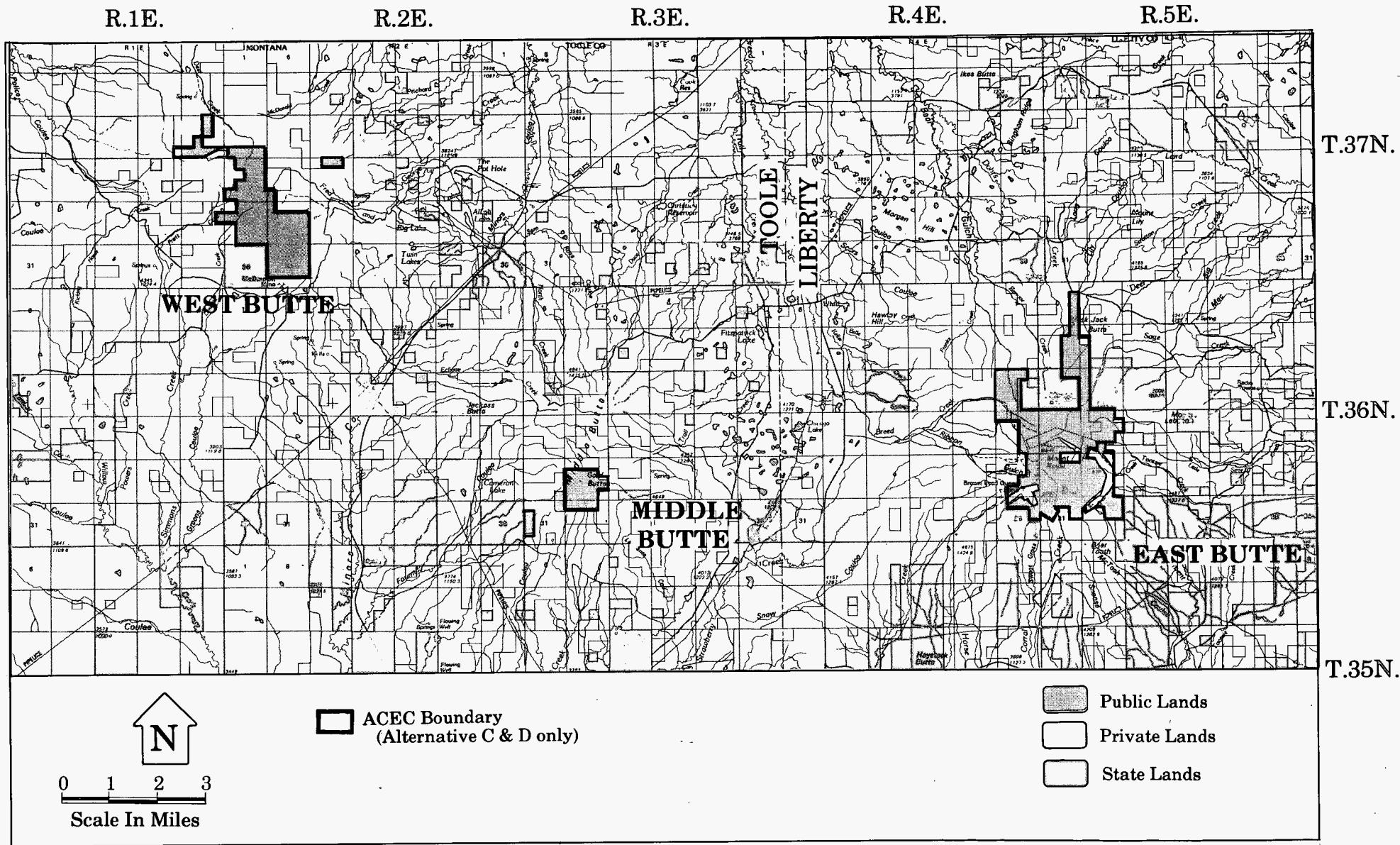
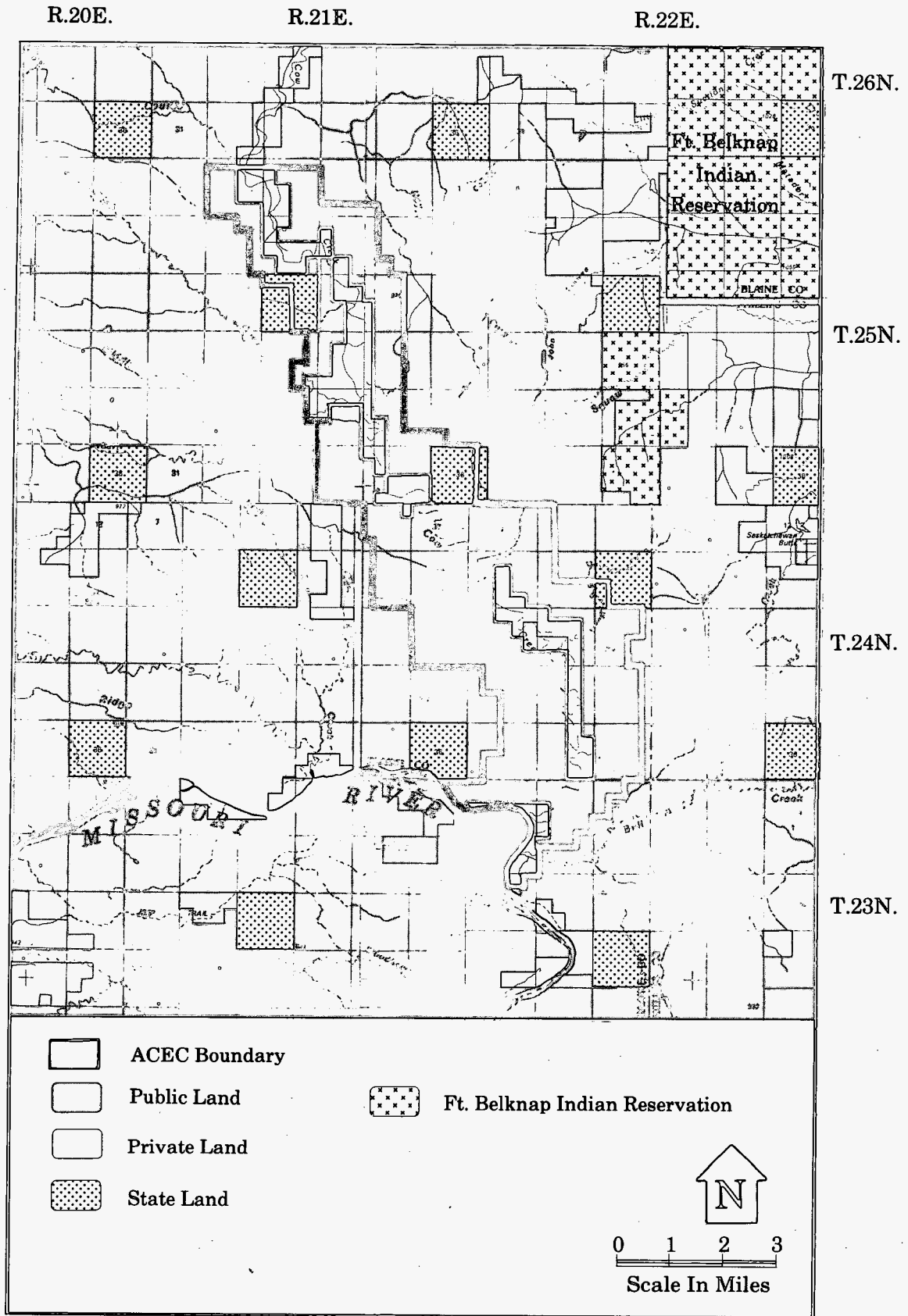




Figure 2.4 Cow Creek Emphasis Area — Surface Ownership Map.



### Sweet Grass Hills Implementation

The BLM would prepare an activity plan detailing the specific management of the area *and* to preserve the local values for Native American religious uses, wildlife and recreation. The BLM would pursue a protective withdrawal for the ACEC. This protective withdrawal would segregate the ACEC from all mineral entry. *Locatable mineral development could continue on valid claims existing at the time of the protective withdrawal. Validity exams would be conducted on preexisting claims when in the public's best interest. The validity exam constitutes due process. A mining claimant has not established a property right if a validity exam reveals the claim is not supported by a mineral discovery under the mining laws.* The withdrawal would eliminate future mining claim location. The BLM would consult with Native American tribes prior to authorizing developments in the ACEC area.

*The Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines (Appendix 2.2) would be used to develop site-specific mitigation for activities in occupied raptor habitat. The BLM would work with operators to apply the raptor guidelines, as necessary, to new activities on existing leases to protect sensitive, threatened or endangered raptor species. These guidelines would be used to implement a special stipulation to be applied to new leases in occupied raptor habitat (see Appendix 2.2). The raptor guidelines would be applied on a site-specific basis to protect an active nest at the time an APD is submitted and may be waived by the authorized officer at the production phase.*

*These guidelines would also be used to mitigate impacts caused by development on valid existing claims in the ACEC when project specific analysis determines they are needed to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of federal lands.*

Allotment management plans in the ACEC would be revised to emphasize the maintenance and/or improvement of elk habitats. This may be accomplished through season-of-use modification, pasture modification, or temporary exclosures, etc.

*The BLM has reviewed the East Butte, Bureau of Reclamation (BR) withdrawal (569.67 acres) and recommended that 40 acres of the withdrawal be retained and the remaining 529.67 acres returned to BLM administration. The withdrawal was originally granted as a riprap source for reclamation projects. The 40 acres still needed by BR are adjacent to the existing quarry and provide riprap reserves that may be needed in the future. This acreage would not be reopened to mineral entry; it would be managed under the protective withdrawal for this ACEC.*

### Cow Creek Implementation

The BLM would prepare an activity plan for the area. The plan would provide guidance to preserve scenic, interpretive, recreation and paleontological values in the Cow Creek area associated with the Nez Perce National Historic Trail. The BLM would coordinate this plan with the USFS since that agency has the lead responsibility for managing the Nez Perce Trail.

The BLM would reevaluate and adjust the visual management ratings in the area. These ratings would be used to determine whether any projects would impact the scenic quality and if so, what mitigating measures would be necessary prior to authorizing the project.

The BLM would manage the area with a strong emphasis on riparian management. Existing allotment management plans would be revised to incorporate grazing management practices to improve riparian community conditions. Special emphasis would be given to measures to discourage or prevent livestock congregation along the bottoms.

The BLM would protect paleontological sites within the ACEC from surface disturbance by other management activities while still allowing scientific use of this resource.

Any future ROW grant would be based on valid, existing rights within the area. All such developments would be subject to strict visual and reclamation stipulations.



## Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

BLM recreation management would emphasize the maximum preservation of the natural environment and cultural values of the UMNWSR Corridor. This management may be accomplished through public and private sector initiatives.

### Visitor Services Implementation

The BLM would redetermine user capacity based on the Limits of Acceptable Change (see Appendix 2.10). This process would, with public input, identify how much environmental change *in use areas* would be acceptable. Management would keep the character and rate of change due to human factors within acceptable levels, emphasizing the protection of the natural and cultural environment. Parameters considered during the review process would include but would not be limited to, vegetation change; the amount of bare ground near a campsite; bankside trails; sanitation problems; litter; and available firewood.

The Fort Benton Visitor Contact Station would be maintained and operated to provide visitors with permits and information on the river. The center would also provide interpretive information on the cultural and natural history of the area under the provisions of the MOU with the National Park Service or future legislation. The ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would provide permits and health and safety information to river users. All of these visitor service centers would be operated from the weekend before Memorial Day through Thanksgiving weekend, *as necessary and as funding levels permit*.

Interpretive activities in the corridor would be in conjunction with the current Floater's Guide. No physical improvements or facilities would be provided for interpretation except at *major launch/take out points* on the river.

Information or interpretive signs, except hazard warnings visible from the river, would be prohibited on all federal lands.

Islands would be closed to all uses. The islands would be set aside for wildlife habitat.

### Facility Management Implementation

The BLM would continue to maintain the undeveloped sites by clearing brush, a maximum of 1/4-acre, for campsite location and removing trash left at these areas.

The existing semi-developed sites would be maintained, unless use is impacting natural and cultural resources. If impacts cannot be mitigated the BLM would close those sites. Additional site development would occur only if impacts can be mitigated, old areas can be reclaimed and no crucial habitat or cultural resources are impacted. New capital improvements would only be allowed along major roads within the recreational sections and when a clear public need is identified.

Developed sites would be restricted to the existing launch/take out sites in the recreational and scenic sections of the corridor. Development would be dependent on demonstrated need, economic feasibility and whether impacts can be mitigated.

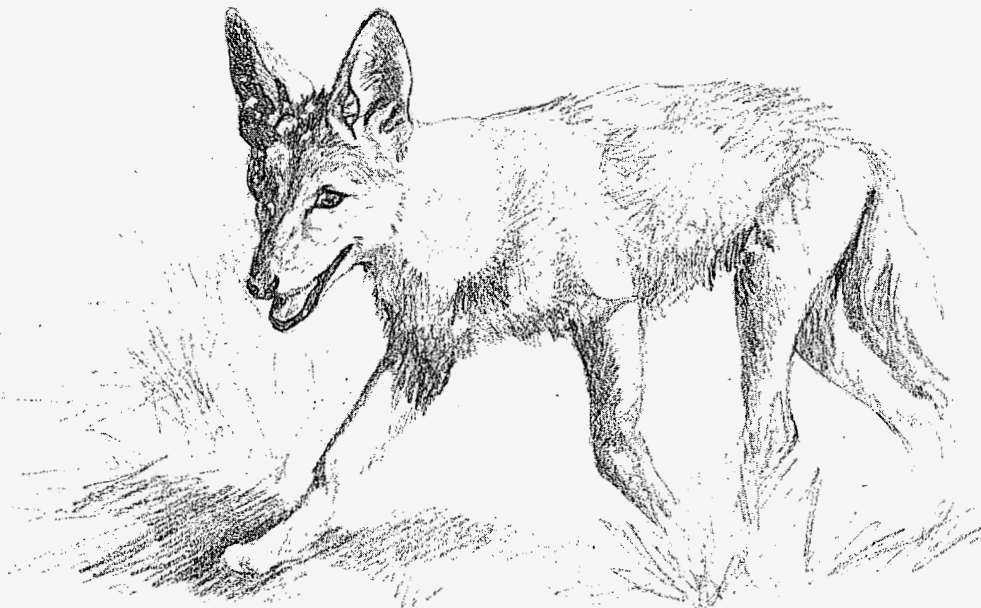
The BLM would acquire the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks campsites. These areas would be managed under the constraints listed above.

### Private Sector Initiative Implementation

The BLM would not allow the development of major concession complexes on public land. The BLM would allow private sector initiatives in campground maintenance and development under the constraints discussed above *under Facility Management*. The BLM would permit outfitters, guides and boat rental within/upon the river. *Private sector initiatives would be managed within the constraints of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended and under the guidance of this RMP. Failure to comply would cause a revocation of the operator's permit.*

### Health and Safety Implementation

The BLM would continue and may expand visitor services which provide for public health and safety. BLM would assume responsibility for law enforcement. The BLM would continue cooperative efforts for search and rescue.





## ALTERNATIVE D (The Preferred Alternative)

This alternative is a balance of the preceding alternatives. It balances the demands of resource development and the protection of sensitive areas and important resources. If selected, this alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common To All Alternatives section would form the RMP.

### Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would achieve a public land base which consolidates public holdings in areas containing high value resources. *A total of 15,689 acres of public land would be identified for disposal, with an emphasis on exchange. These lands meet FLPMA Section 203(a)(1) sale criteria and are shown in Appendix 1.2, List 1. An additional 34,428 acres of public land has not been field inventoried, but would be available for disposal by exchange if in the public's interest and a field inventory indicates a parcel meets FLPMA Section 203(a)(1) criteria, disposal of the parcel could be by sale. These lands are shown in Appendix 1.2, List 2.*

The State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment (USDI-BLM 1984) was revised by this alternative for the planning area. The criteria presented in the State Director's Guidance has been applied to the lands in the RAs. The criteria applicable to each resource area can be found in Appendix 1.1. As a result of evaluating the lands in the planning area against the criteria, the map presented in the State Director's Guidance no longer applies to the planning area; it is replaced by Map 3 in the back of this document.

### Implementation

*The preferred method of disposal would be through exchange.*

*The management objective for disposing of the exchange lands identified in Appendix 1.2 would be to concentrate acquisition in (no priority intended): the Missouri and Marias River areas; the Cow Creek, Sweet Grass Hills and Kevin Rim ACECs and surrounding areas with similar values; the north Blaine County antelope winter range; and important wildlife habitat (including areas outside the planning area such as the Rocky Mountain Front). All acquisitions would depend on a willing seller, unless the public interest determination indicates the use of eminent domain authority is appropriate.*

### Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would provide for the public use of off-road vehicles while protecting the resource values and providing for public safety. The BLM would limit off-road vehicle use to designated roads and trails in the UMNWSR Corridor, the Sweet Grass Hills, Cow Creek and Kevin Rim ACECs and in important riparian areas. Travel in WSAs would be limited to existing roads and vehicular ways. *Yearlong ORV limitations would apply to 130,070 acres.* The BLM would limit off-road vehicles seasonally in the following areas: elk and deer crucial winter areas and calving/fawning areas; antelope crucial winter range; raptor nesting

areas, grouse nesting areas and sedimentary breaks type soils (298,039 acres). *Following the development of activity plans for the Sweet Grass Hills and Kevin Rim ACECs, ORV restrictions may be applied by type of vehicle also. Travel in areas of sedimentary soils would be restricted to existing roads and trails during the wet period (April 1—November 1). These areas can be seen on Map 4 in the back of this document. The Gist Road between the cabins and the Missouri River (5 acres) would be closed to vehicular use.*

The BLM may issue permits on a case-by-case basis for administrative vehicular use in these areas. *The remainder of the planning area (197,984 acres) would remain open to ORV use.*

### Implementation

The BLM would conduct an intensive road and trail inventory in the areas mentioned above. An ORV implementation plan would be written and would identify specific restrictions to be applied in limited areas. All implementation plans would contain details for signing and monitoring designated areas. Table 2.3 identifies seasonal restrictions which would apply to important wildlife areas. *Implementation of restrictions outlined under the limited designations in this document would not be put into effect until ORV or other activity plans are completed. Current ORV restrictions in the UMNWSR Corridor, Missouri Breaks, and WSAs would continue until these activity plans are implemented.*

The BLM would publish maps showing designated areas and the applicable restrictions. An area for intensive ORV use would be designated if the need arises based on the following criteria—

- (1) the area would be at least 5 miles from an emphasis area;
- (2) the area should not be located in a Class I or II VRM area particularly in areas receiving high non-motorized recreational use.
- (3) the area would be located on public land with a buffer of public land to reduce conflicts with private landowners;
- (4) the area would have good public access or the capability for such access;
- (5) the area would be located where mineral discovery and development are not likely;
- (6) the area would avoid reservoirs, watersheds of important reservoirs, floodplains, stream channels, wetlands and riparian zones;
- (7) the area would contain suitable topography and soil conditions to maximize ORV users enjoyment and reduce health and safety risks (i.e., steep, but not too steep, few surface rocks, non-flooding areas);
- (8) these areas would be located 1/4-mile from raptor nest sites 1 1/2-miles from known grouse leks; 1/2-mile from known bald eagle nests and 1 mile away from known peregrine falcon nests.
- (9) use of crucial wildlife ranges would not be allowed May 1—June 30.

Areas designated wilderness by Congress would be closed to all vehicular traffic at the time of designation. A portion of the Cow Creek WSA is currently recommended as preliminarily suitable for designation. WSAs which are not designated would be managed under adjoining ORV constraints, if any apply.

Written authorization could be granted for vehicular use in limited and closed areas for administrative purposes.

The BLM would acquire access to intensive use areas through exchange, easement or purchase.

## Right-of-Way Location

The BLM would permit rights-of-way, provided the impacts can be mitigated. Areas under specific management prescriptions (ACECs, WSAs, etc.) or having important, sensitive resources would be avoidance areas. Nationally designated areas for natural or cultural resources (wilderness areas, etc.) would be exclusion areas.

Communication sites would *not be permitted on the West and Middle Buttes* of the Sweet Grass Hills.

## Implementation

The Wild sections of the UMNWSR would be exclusion areas for ROW siting.

The scenic and recreational sections of the UMNWSR would be avoidance areas. Table 2.4 lists the windows for ROW siting through these sections. New facilities would only be permitted in these segments if the natural, physical and cultural qualities of the corridor could be maintained.

The Kevin Rim ACEC would be an avoidance area for lineal ROWs. *Following a raptor inventory, and development of an activity plan, the Bureau would determine where ROW facilities (both transmission and distribution) could be located off the east side of Kevin Rim. The ACEC activity plan would determine if any windows off the east rim should be designated, and if so, how many and where. Windows would not necessarily be established along existing facilities.*

Cow Creek and the Sweet Grass Hills ACECs, WSAs, riparian and wetland areas which meet the definition of wetland (see Glossary) and areas of sedimentary breaks soils would be avoidance areas. Future ROW siting would only be permitted if impacts in these areas could be adequately mitigated.

Communication site location would be encouraged at existing sites but may be permitted elsewhere in the planning area (except on the West and Middle Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills) provided impacts are mitigated.

## Emphasis Areas

The BLM would provide protection of the significant resources in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, and Cow Creek areas (see Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4). The federal surface in these three areas would be designated ACECs and managed for the following resource values.

The Kevin Rim would be designated and managed to protect, maintain and/or enhance the peregrine falcon habitat, other sensitive raptor habitat, and cultural resources while encouraging other types of multiple use activities to the extent they are compatible with the ACEC designation.

*The main goal of the Sweet Grass Hills ACEC, which is comprised of the East, Middle and West Buttes, would be to protect habitat which has high potential for reintroduction of the endangered peregrine falcon; protect areas of traditional religious importance to Native American tribes; and protect seasonally important elk and deer habitat. Other types of multiple use activities such as hunting, livestock grazing and mineral development would be conditioned to be compatible with the ACEC designation.*

The Cow Creek area would be designated to protect, maintain and/or enhance the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, Cow Island Trail, and other associated resources.

## Kevin Rim Implementation

*This guidance would be followed until an activity plan is completed which would use this guidance to identify specific management actions. The Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines (Appendix 2.2) would be used to develop site-specific mitigation for activities in occupied raptor habitat. The BLM would work with operators to apply necessary guidelines to any new activity on existing leases which threatens to disrupt the nesting and rearing cycles of T&E or sensitive raptor species using the rim. These guidelines (see Appendix 2.2) would be used to implement a special stipulation to all new oil and gas leases in the raptor habitat area; if warranted by resource information, and may be waived by the authorized officer.*

The BLM would inventory the Kevin Rim area for cultural resources. Based upon this survey and/or additional surveys the BLM would not authorize projects within 1/4-mile below the base of the Kevin Rim escarpment unless impacts to the cultural resources could be mitigated.

BLM would encourage ROW location off the west, rather than the east, side of Kevin Rim. *Following a raptor inventory, the Bureau would determine where ROW facilities (both transmission and distribution) could be located off the east side of the rim. The ACEC activity plan would determine if any windows off the east rim should be designated, and if so, how many and where. Windows, if established, would not necessarily be established along existing facilities.*

## Sweet Grass Hills Implementation

*This guidance would be followed until an activity plan is completed using this guidance to identify specific management actions.*

1. *Native American tribes who utilize the area would be consulted prior to surface disturbing activities which require BLM authorization (excluding casual use). This consultation would provide guidance in applying restrictions or mitigating measures where there may be impacts to traditional cultural values.*

2. *The Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines (see Appendix 2.2) would be used to develop site-specific mitigation for activities in occupied raptor habitat. The BLM would work with operators to apply necessary guidelines to any new activity on existing leases which threatens to disrupt the nesting and rearing cycles of T&E or sensitive raptor species using the area. These guidelines would be used to implement a special stipulation to all new oil and gas leases in the raptor habitat area; if warranted by resource information and may be waived by the authorized officer.*

3. No communication sites would be permitted on the West or Middle Buttes.

4. Motorized vehicles would be limited to designated roads and trails in the ACEC. The activity plan would further define limitations regarding time of year and type of vehicle.

5. The Bureau would continue to monitor the ACEC's wildlife habitat values to ensure that management goals and objectives are met. Livestock allotment management plans in the ACEC would emphasize the maintenance and/or improvement of important wildlife winter habitat. This may be accomplished through season-of-use modification, pasture modification, temporary exclosures, etc.

6. The BLM has reviewed the East Butte, Bureau of Reclamation (BR) withdrawal (569.67 acres) and recommended that 40 acres of the withdrawal be retained and the remaining 529.67 acres returned to BLM administration. The withdrawal was originally granted as a riprap source for reclamation projects. The 40 acres still needed by BR are adjacent to the existing quarry and provide riprap reserves that may be needed in the future. The area revoked from the withdrawal would be opened to mineral entry and would be managed under the management guidance for the area.

7. To ensure the orderly development of the mineral resources while protecting the ACEC values, the following management guidelines would apply:

A. The ACEC would remain open to mineral entry.

B. An approved Plan of Operations would be required for all activities (43 CFR 3809.1-4(b)), exceeding casual use (as defined in 43 CFR 3809.1-2). "Operations" includes all activity associated with exploration, assessment work, development and processing of mineral deposits located under the mining laws.

C. In order to ensure adequate rehabilitation, bonding would be required on all operations, except for casual use (43 CFR 3809.1-9).

D. The following reclamation guidance would be applied to Plans of Operation. This guidance has been developed from 43 CFR 3809.1-3; and 43 CFR 3809.1-5 to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation to ACEC values:

⇒ Rehabilitation measures would take into consideration the replacement of disturbed elk and mule deer habitat components.

⇒ In order to accommodate mining operations while protecting important wildlife habitat, timing restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation.

⇒ Mining operations located in crucial wildlife habitat may be required to rehabilitate their previous disturbances prior to initiating new surface disturbing activities in order to keep disturbed acreage to a minimum. This would provide for continued mining operations while rehabilitating critical wildlife habitat at the earliest possible opportunity.

8. The potential to sell forest products from the Sweet Grass Hills would be determined in the activity plan for this ACEC. Forest product disposal under the activity plan would conform to other resource restrictions. Only minor forest products may be sold pending completion of the activity plan..

## Cow Creek Implementation

This guidance would be followed until an activity plan is completed which would use this guidance to identify specific management actions. The plan would provide guidance to preserve scenic, interpretive, recreation and paleontological values in the Cow Creek area associated with the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

The BLM would coordinate this plan with the guidance provided in the comprehensive *Nez Perce Trail Management Plan* prepared by the USFS.

The BLM would reevaluate and adjust the visual management ratings in the area. These ratings would be used to determine whether any projects would impact the scenic quality and if so, what mitigating measures would be necessary prior to authorizing the project. The BLM would manage the area with a strong emphasis on riparian management. Existing allotment management plans would be revised to incorporate grazing management practices to improve riparian community conditions. Management emphasis would be to discourage or prevent livestock congregation along the bottoms to maintain or enhance riparian vegetation. The BLM would protect paleontological sites within the ACEC from surface disturbance by other management activities. Scientific use of the resource would be allowed. Any future ROW grant would be based on valid, existing rights within the corridor. All such significant developments would be subject to strict visual and reclamation stipulations.

## Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

The BLM would provide recreational opportunities and visitor services consistent with the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended*. Future developments would also mitigate impacts to natural and cultural resources. Mitigation measures would be determined after a site specific evaluation.

## Visitor Services Implementation

The BLM would redetermine user capacity based on the Limits of Acceptable Change (see Appendix 2.10). This process would, with public participation, identify how much environmental change would be acceptable. Management would keep the character and rate of change due to human factors within acceptable levels. Parameters to be considered during the review process would include but would not be limited to, vegetation change; amount of bare ground near a campsite; bankside trails; sanitation problems; litter; and available firewood.

The Fort Benton Visitor Contact Station would be maintained and operated to provide visitors with permits and information on the river. The contact station would also provide interpretive information on the cultural and natural history of the area under the provisions of the MOU with the NPS or future legislation. The ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would provide permits and health and safety information to river users. All of these ranger stations would be operated from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving weekend, as necessary and as funding levels permit.

Areas would be developed for self guided interpretive study. These developments would be at appropriate geological, historical, cultural, paleontological value or natural areas. Prior to developing interpretive sites for cultural



resources, the site would be evaluated and mitigation developed to ensure potential impacts to the resources could be minimized. These developments may include interpretive signs and displays. Current sites which would be developed are Stafford Ferry, Cow Creek, Evans Bend, Steamboat Point, Little Sandy, and Hole-In-The-Wall. Other sites may be developed if there is substantial public use or where BLM acquires important new lands or major new resource discoveries are made. Any signing would be consistent with visual resource management objectives.

Recreational use of islands would not be permitted during deer fawning and waterfowl brood rearing times. Islands would be closed to use from April 1—May 15.

### Facility Management Implementation

The BLM would continue to maintain the undeveloped sites by clearing brush (maximum 1/4-acre) for campsite location, enforcing a pack in/pack out policy, and if necessary, removing the trash left at these areas. All undeveloped sites in the recreational and scenic segments of the river would be signed. All sites would be shown on user maps.

Undeveloped sites may be upgraded to semi-developed sites in scenic and recreational segments if one or more of the following criteria are met—

- (1) increasing use of the river or of undeveloped sites;
- (2) impacts to soil and vegetation become long term; i.e., heavy use begin to compact soils and kill vegetation as determined by monitoring;
- (3) sanitation becomes a health problem;
- (4) additional sites are needed to rest existing campsites;
- (5) better distribution of sites is needed.

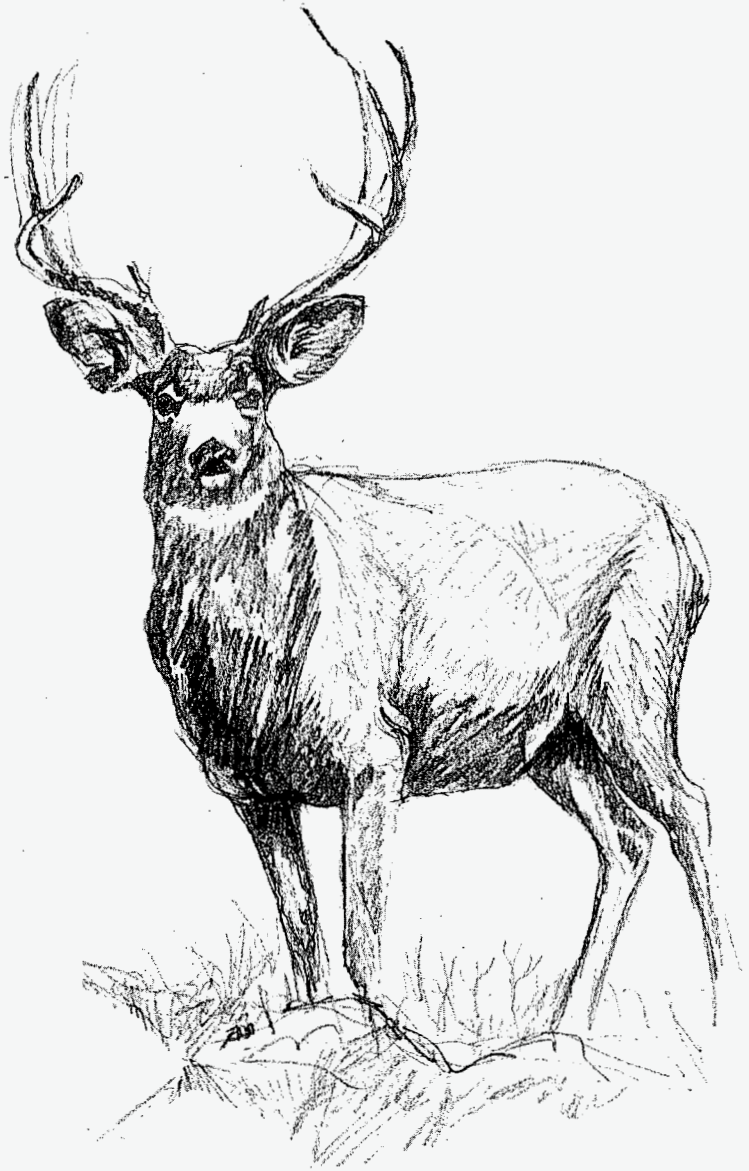
The BLM would maintain all semi-developed sites. New sites would be developed if one or more of the above criteria are met. New capital improvements would be allowed if impacts to cultural and natural resources could be mitigated to an acceptable level. Improvements in the wild section would be allowed if the sites can be serviced by existing roads or by river. All improvements would comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended.

*Developed sites would be established and managed, in recreational segments, based on demand and economic feasibility.*

The BLM would continue to manage state-owned sites under the Memorandum of Understanding with State of Montana. These sites would be managed under BLM management guidance for the river as presented in this RMP.

### Private Sector Initiatives Implementation

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives in development of river management opportunities. The UMNWSR offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be funded by the Bureau. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, can be used to accomplish goals compatible with UMNWSR management. These goals may or may not generate profit or result in permanent facilities along the river corridor.



*A wide variety of activities could be generated by private sector initiatives. Livery services for boats or horses, overnight or longer lodging facilities or sales of food/water and other provisions to river visitors and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Among other possibilities would be opportunities for institutions to use the UMNWSR for touring and instructional purposes, for the development of privately funded research and for expanded use of the area in regional promotional activity.*

*If there is a need established for some type of facility, whether it be BLM or private sector initiative, or a cooperative BLM-private venture, the merits and economic feasibility would be assessed. The developments if feasible, would be managed under the guidance provided in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended, this RMP, and the coordinated river activity plan.*

### Health and Safety Implementation

The BLM would continue and may expand visitor services operations to provide for public health, safety and law enforcement. Search and rescue operations and law enforcement would continue as a cooperative effort with local and state agencies.

## BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The decisions outlined in the RMP will be implemented over a period of 10 to 15 years, depending on budget and staff availability. The current funding level would be adequate to implement the *Alternative A*, No Action Alternative. *Alternative B* would require a 3 to 5% increase and *Alternatives C* and *D* would require increases between 5 and 10%.

*The extension of the visitor services at Fort Benton, Coal Banks and Judith Landing and the improvements of undeveloped sites along the UMNWSR would be responsible for the 3 to 5% increase (Alternative B). Implementing an intensive ORV use area and ROW avoidance areas would also require some additional administrative functions over the existing level.*

*The extended visitor services at Fort Benton, Coal Banks and Judith Landing would be the primary reason for a 5 to 10% increase (Alternatives C and D). In addition, Alternative C would require full BLM law enforcement responsibility, while Alternative D would expand the BLM's role in law enforcement and search and rescue. The implementation for the ACECs would require additional management associated with activity plans.*

*The implementation of ORV management would require an inventory of roads and trails in designated areas along with publishing the maps and signing of these areas.*

Funding levels would affect the timing and implementation of management actions and project proposals but would not affect resource allocations made under this RMP.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The impacts of implementation, as seen through resource monitoring, will be evaluated on a periodic basis over the life of the plan. The general purposes of this resource monitoring and plan evaluation will be—

- (1) to determine if an action is fulfilling the purpose and need for which it was designed, or if there is a need for modification or termination of an action;
- (2) to discover unanticipated and/or unpredictable effects;
- (3) to determine if mitigative measures are effective as prescribed;
- (4) to ensure that decisions are being implemented as scheduled;
- (5) to provide continuing evaluation of consistency with state and local plans and programs; and
- (6) to provide for continuing comparison of plan benefits versus costs including social, economic, and environmental.

A specific monitoring plan was prepared (1984) for the wildlife, watershed and grazing management programs in each of the four resource areas included in the RMP area. These monitoring plans will be used to monitor the implementation of specific management guidance and actions which impact wildlife, watershed and grazing management.

## Wildlife Resources

Monitoring is directed at the biotic resource components, using both temporary and permanent studies. The results of these studies can be used to determine responses in habitat condition and trend; food availability, composition, and vigor; changes in cover and habitat effectiveness; and habitat management objectives.

Some of the methodologies available include: canopy cover transects; browse transects; woody riparian survey and photo plots; habitat condition ratings; color-infrared aerial photography; fish, bird and mammals species composition and population surveys; waterfowl population dynamics; raptor use and mortality from powerlines; pellet group transects; and selected threatened and endangered species inventories.

## Watershed Resources

*Monitoring the impacts of management activities on watershed condition is done in the following ways: measuring ground cover to assess erosion and sedimentation potential; measuring runoff, sediment production, water quality and water quantity at stream gauging stations, studying runoff plots; monitoring streambank stability and riparian communities at selected sites; and establishing demonstration units to exhibit the affects of management on riparian communities; and monitoring observation wells for groundwater level and quality. Climatic data (precipitation, air temperature, soil moisture and soil temperature) will be collected and used in evaluation along with other monitoring data.*

*The type of monitoring is dependent upon the type and location of the activity. Monitoring parameters, levels, and frequency will be determined at the activity plan stage.*

## Grazing Management

The grazing allotment management plans (AMP) will provide the information needed to implement and monitor specific management decisions which impact watershed, wildlife and grazing management. Monitoring efforts will focus on vegetative trend, forage utilization, actual use (livestock numbers and periods of grazing) and climate in the *I* category allotments. The data collected from these studies will be used to evaluate current stocking rates, to schedule livestock moves from pasture to pasture, to determine levels of forage competition, and to detect changes in plant communities and to identify patterns of forage use. Some of the methodologies to be used include Daubenmire canopy transects, photo plots, key forage plant utilization transects, aerial and ground reconnaissance of animal numbers and grazing patterns, actual use questionnaires and low altitude aerial photography transects.

Priorities for monitoring grazing allotments are established in these AMPs. The methodology and intensity of study chosen for a particular allotment will be determined by the nature and severity of the resource conflicts present in that allotment.



## SELECTION OF PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE

*In selecting the proposed management plan each alternative was reviewed for:*

1. effectiveness in resolving planning issues;
2. conformance with the guidance established by the planning criteria;
3. avoidance of unnecessary impacts to the human environment, and
4. responsiveness to public opinion.

Alternative D, as modified following public review, was selected as the Proposed Management Plan. This alternative represents a balanced management strategy for public lands and minerals within the planning area. The rationale for selecting Alternative D as the proposed management plan is presented below by issue.

### Land Tenure Adjustment

Alternative D establishes management direction to accomplish public land adjustment and clearly identifies areas where BLM would like to increase its presence. It identifies criteria to evaluate private lands which may be acquired and constraints which must be met prior to disposal of public lands. A total of 50,117 acres have been identified for disposal. Of this acreage, 15,689 acres meet the sale criteria under FLPMA and an additional 34,428 acres may be evaluated for disposal by the sale criteria in Sec. 203(a)(1) of FLPMA, if in the public's interest. Alternative D increases BLM's flexibility in accomplishing land pattern adjustment in the planning area.

### Off-Road Vehicle Management

Alternative D amends the ORV designations already developed under direction of EO 11644. Restrictions have been expanded to provide seasonal protection in areas with sedimentary breaks soils, and important wildlife habitat. The designations provide yearlong restrictions in WSAs, ACECs, the UMNWSR and in riparian areas. The lower 1/4-mile of the Gist Road would be closed. This alternative provides criteria for the designation of an intensive ORV use area in response to future demands. These designations address resource conflicts and concerns while recognizing the possible future demands for ORV use on the public lands.

### Right-of-Way Location

Alternative D provides management direction for right-of-way location on the public lands and identifies exclusion and avoidance areas to protect sensitive resources. The majority of the public lands remain open to right-of-way location. Communication site location would not be permitted on the West and Middle Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills. The resolution of this issue provides public land users with useful information for planning future ROWs on or across public lands.

### Emphasis Areas

Alternative D designates and provides management guidance for three ACECs in the planning area. Public surface lands in the Kevin Rim; West, Middle and East Butte of the Sweet Grass Hills and the Cow Creek areas would be designated as ACECs. All three areas would be managed to allow multiple use activities while preserving and enhancing the resources for which the areas are designated. Management emphasis in Kevin Rim would be for raptor and cultural resources. Management in the Sweet Grass Hills would emphasize the protection of Native American traditional religious and cultural sites, raptor habitat and crucial wildlife habitat. The Cow Creek area would be managed to preserve and protect portions of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Cow Island Trail.

This alternative recognizes and provides management protection to unique resources in the planning area. The management guidance provides for the orderly development of consumptive uses, i.e., mineral development, while protecting the values for which the areas were designated.

### UMNWSR Management

This alternative provides a balance of recreational opportunities within the river corridor by providing recreation opportunities and visitor services consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended, with an emphasis on mitigating impacts to natural and cultural resources disturbed by future development. This alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common to All Alternatives section provides direction for managing recreation within the UMNWSR.

## COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Table 2.5 presents a summary of resource allocations and management actions to resolve the issues as they would occur under each alternative. Table 2.6 summarizes the moderate and significant environmental consequences by issue for each alternative. For additional information on environmental consequences refer to Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences.



TABLE 2.5 WEST HILINE ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY TABLE

ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D - PROPOSED
<b>LAND TENURE</b>			
BLM would attain a land pattern conducive to ease of management. Land adjustments would be by land exchange, acquisition and donation under the State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment. 44,143 acres would be available for exchange. Acquisitions would be concentrated in retention areas.	A more manageable land pattern would be attained through disposal by exchange or sale. 50,117 acres appear to meet FLPMA criteria for land adjustment through exchange and sale. Acquisitions would be concentrated in areas with large federal holdings.	BLM would retain the majority of the public lands. 15,689 acres would be available for disposal through exchange or sale. Acquisitions would be concentrated in special management and high value resource areas.	BLM land adjustment actions would consolidate high value resource lands. 15,689 acres meet FLPMA criteria for disposal through exchange or sale; 34,428 would be used for disposal by exchange, or by sale if they meet the sale criteria under FLPMA, for lands with higher resource values. Acquisition would be concentrated in special management and high value resource areas.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
Land adjustment would be by exchange, donation, and acquisition under the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Acquisitions will be concentrated in UMNWSR Corridor, North Blaine County, and the Sweet Grass Hills.	Land adjustment would be achieved primarily by exchange for lands of equal or better values. Acquisition would be concentrated in the Sweet Grass Hills, Kevin Rim, Marias River, UMNWSR Corridor, Cow Creek, the Rocky Mountain Front and important wildlife habitat areas.	Exchange would be the preferred disposal method to acquire lands of equal or greater resource values. Acquisitions would be concentrated in UMNWSR, Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, Cow Creek, Marias River, North Blaine County and important wildlife habitat areas.	Exchange would be the preferred method of disposal. Acquisitions would be concentrated in UMNWSR, Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, Cow Creek, Marias River, North Blaine County, important wildlife habitat and other areas within or outside the planning area.
Acres Available for Disposal by Any Means	50,117 acres	15,689 acres	15,689 acres
Exchange	44,143 acres		34,428 acres
<b>OFF-ROAD VEHICLE MANAGEMENT</b>			
Wilderness study areas and sedimentary breaks soils with slopes greater than 30% would remain designated "limited" for ORV use.	The BLM would maximize ORV use. WSAs would be designated "limited" areas.	Limited yearlong restrictions would apply to WSAs, ACECs, UMNWSR, sedimentary break soil areas and riparian areas; seasonal restrictions would apply in important wildlife areas. The Gist Road would be designated "closed" from the cabins to the river (1/4 mile).	Limited yearlong restrictions would apply to WSAs, ACECs, UMNWSR, and riparian areas; seasonal restrictions would apply in important wildlife areas and areas of sedimentary soils. The Gist Road would be designated "closed" from the cabins to the river (1/4 mile).
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
Publish ORV map and sign area.	Publish ORV map and sign WSAs.	Inventory roads, trails, and ways in above areas, publish map of road restrictions for each area. Sign areas.	Inventory roads, trails, and ways in above areas, publish map of road restrictions for each area. Sign areas.
	Designate and manage an intensive ORV use area of about 640 acres using criteria in the document.		An intensive ORV use area of about 640 acres may be designated based on public demand.
<b>ACREAGE DESIGNATED</b>			
Open	477,763	594,098	197,299
Limited			
Yearlong	148,335	32,000	130,070
Seasonal	0	0	298,039
Closed	0	0	5

**TABLE 2.5 WEST HILINE ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY TABLE (Continued)**

ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D - PROPOSED
<b>RIGHT-OF-WAY LOCATION</b>			
The planning area would remain open to lineal ROW and communication site location.	The BLM would permit lineal ROWs outside the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Corridor. The river corridor would be designated an avoidance area; windows would be provided through the UMNWSR Corridor. The entire planning area would remain open to communication site location.	The BLM would protect important natural and cultural resources by designating WSAs, the Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek ACECs, riparian areas and areas of sedimentary soils as avoidance areas. The UMNWSR and the Kevin Rim would be exclusion areas. Communication sites would not be permitted on the West and Middle Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills.	The BLM would permit ROWs, subject to mitigation. The following areas would be avoidance areas for ROWs: scenic and recreational segments UMNWSR; ACECs; WSAs; riparian areas and sedimentary breaks areas. Windows would be provided through the UMNWSR Corridor, however the wild sections of the UMNWSR would be exclusion areas. No communication sites would be permitted on West and Middle Buttes.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
BLM would perform environmental review and stipulate necessary mitigating measures prior to authorization.	BLM would perform environmental review of ROW location projects. Mitigation of impacts would meet legal requirements.	BLM would attempt to route ROWs along existing corridors. If a location is in an avoidance area, the environmental analysis must show the disturbance can be fully mitigated.	In the UMNWSR, the BLM would attempt to route new facilities within a one mile corridor along existing facilities. If a ROW must be located in an avoidance area, the environmental analysis must show the disturbance could be adequately mitigated.
<b>ACREAGE DESIGNATED</b>			
Open 626,098	537,945	420,343	421,023
Avoidance 0	88,153	112,945	141,718
Exclusion 0	0	92,810	63,357
<b>EMPHASIS AREAS</b>			
BLM would continue to manage the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas under current guidance.	BLM would continue to manage the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas under current guidance.	BLM would provide maximum protection to resources in Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek. The three areas would be designated ACECs.	BLM would provide protection to resources in Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek. The three areas would be designated ACECs.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
<b>KEVIN RIM</b>			
Kevin Rim would not be designated as an ACEC. Standard oil and gas stipulations would be applied to exploration and development activities.	Kevin Rim would not be designated as an ACEC. Standard oil and gas stipulations would be applied to exploration and development activities.	Public surface would be designated an ACEC. Special stipulations to protect raptors would be applied within the emphasis area (Appendix 2.2, Map 3 and Fig. 1.2).  BLM would not authorize unmitigated surface disturbance activities within 1/4-mile of the base of the rim to protect cultural resources. New ROWs would not be permitted off the east side, nor would new ROWs be permitted if industry relinquishes present ROWs off the east side of Kevin Rim.	Public surface would be designated an ACEC. Special stipulations to protect raptors would be applied within the emphasis area (Appendix 2.2, Map 3 and Fig. 1.2).  BLM would not authorize unmitigated surface disturbance activities within 1/4-mile of the rim to protect cultural resources.  BLM would encourage ROW location off the west, rather than the east, side of the rim. An activity plan would identify the location and number of windows off the east side, if any.
ACEC Acreage		4,657 acres	4,657 acres

**TABLE 2.5 WEST HILINE ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY TABLE (Continued)**

ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D - PROPOSED
<b>SWEET GRASS HILLS</b>			
The Sweet Grass Hills would not be designated as an ACEC. Current uses would continue under present guidance.	The Sweet Grass Hills would not be designated as an ACEC. Current uses would continue under present guidance.	The public lands on East, West and Middle Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills would be designated an ACEC.	The public lands on East, Middle and West Butte of the Sweet Grass Hills would be designated an ACEC.
Standard stipulations would continue to mitigate impacts to raptors, crucial wildlife areas and cultural resources.	Standard stipulations would continue to mitigate impacts to raptors, crucial wildlife areas and cultural resources.	Special stipulations to protect raptors would be applied within the emphasis area (Appendix 2.2, Map 3 and Figure 1.2).	Special stipulations to protect raptors would be applied within the emphasis area (Appendix 2.2, Map 3 and Figure 1.2).
Existing allotment management plans (AMPs) would continue to be implemented.	Existing allotment management plans (AMPs) would continue to be implemented.	An activity plan would be developed to provide specific guidance addressing Native American religious concerns and future developments and to emphasize the maintenance of wildlife habitat.	An activity plan would be developed to provide specific guidance for addressing Native American religious concerns and future developments, emphasize the maintenance of elk and raptor habitat, and provide guidelines for the orderly development of mineral resources.
The area would remain open to the operation of the mining laws.	The area would remain open to the operation of the mining laws.	The ACEC would be segregated from mineral entry by a protective withdrawal.	The area would remain open to the operation of the mining laws.
The BLM would recommend revocation of 529.67 acres of BR withdrawal on East Butte. These acres would be opened to operation under the mining laws.	The BLM would recommend revocation of 529.67 acres of BR withdrawal on East Butte. These acres would be opened to operation under the mining laws.	The BLM would recommend revocation of 529.67 acres of BR withdrawal on East Butte. These acres would be included in the protective withdrawal for the ACEC.	The BLM would recommend revocation of 529.67 acres of BR withdrawal on East Butte. These acres would be opened to operation of the mining laws.
ACEC Acreage		7,952 acres	7,952 acres
<b>COW CREEK</b>			
A management plan would be written in cooperation with USFS to manage the Nez Perce Historic Trail. Allotment management plans would be modified to incorporate riparian objectives.	A management plan would be written in cooperation with USFS to manage the Nez Perce Historic Trail. Allotment management plans would be modified to incorporate riparian objectives.	The BLM would prepare a coordinated activity plan providing guidance for the preservation of the scenic, interpretive, recreational and paleontological values associated with the Nez Perce Trail; revise visual resource management ratings and emphasize riparian management. The plan would be coordinated with USFS on the management of the Nez Perce Trail.	The BLM would prepare a coordinated activity plan providing guidance for the preservation of the scenic, interpretive, recreational and paleontological values associated with the Nez Perce Trail; revise visual resource management ratings and emphasize riparian management. The plan would be coordinated with USFS on the management of the Nez Perce Trail.
ACEC Acreage		14,000 acres	14,000 acres



**TABLE 2.5 WEST HILINE ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY TABLE (Continued)**

ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D - PROPOSED
<b>UPPER MISSOURI NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER MANAGEMENT</b>			
BLM would continue to provide recreation opportunities consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542) and amendment (PL 94-486).	Recreation opportunities in all segments within the corridor would be maximized with an emphasis on private sector initiatives. Management would be consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542) and amendment (PL 94-486).	BLM management and private sector initiatives would emphasize the maximum preservation of the natural and cultural values of the corridor. Management would be consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542) and amendment (PL 94-486).	BLM would provide recreation opportunities and visitor services consistent with the Wild and Scenic River Act (PL 90-542) and amendment (PL 94-486) with an emphasis on mitigating impacts to natural and cultural resources disturbed by future development.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
<b>VISITOR SERVICES</b>			
Floater use capacity would remain the same. Outfitters would be limited to 30% of the overall carrying capacity.	Floater capacity and outfitter limits would be eliminated.	Floater use capacity would be redetermined based on "limits of acceptable change" given in Appendix 2.10.	Floater use capacity would be redetermined based on "limits of acceptable change" given in Appendix 2.10.
The visitor contact center at Fort Benton and ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would operate from Memorial Day to Labor Day.	The visitor contact center at Fort Benton and ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would operate from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving.	The visitor contact center at Fort Benton and ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would operate from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving.	The visitor contact center at Fort Benton and ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would operate from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving.
Interpretive facilities and sites would be self-guided and keyed to the Floater's Guide.	Interpretive trails and sites would be developed at appropriate historical, archaeological, paleontological and natural area sites.	Interpretive activities would be keyed to the "Floater's Guide". Physical improvements and/or facilities would be restricted to major launch/takeout points.	Areas would be developed for self-guided interpretive study. Interpretive sites may include signs and displays.
Recreational use of islands would be discouraged.	Islands would be available for recreational uses.	Islands would be closed to all uses.	Islands would be closed to recreational uses April 1 - May 15.
<b>FACILITY MANAGEMENT</b>			
BLM would maintain undeveloped sites. Additional semi-developed sites would be allowed based on specific criteria in the document. Developed sites would be allowed at major launch/takeout sites in the recreational sections.	Undeveloped sites would be maintained and upgraded to semi-developed sites over the life of the plan. Additional semi-developed sites may be developed in all sections of the river in accordance with criteria listed. Developed sites would be allowed in the scenic and recreational segments of the river corridor.	BLM would maintain or relocate existing undeveloped and semi-developed sites. Additional sites may be developed only if they meet the criteria and impacts can be mitigated. Capital improvements would be restricted to the recreational sections. Developed sites would be restricted to launch/takeout sites in the recreational and scenic sections.	BLM would maintain undeveloped sites and may upgrade these sites if they meet criteria in the document. New semi-developed sites may be allowed if they meet the criteria and impacts can be mitigated. Developed sites would be restricted to the recreational sections of the river.
BLM would continue management of state recreation sites under MOU with MDFWP.	BLM would not manage state recreation sites.	BLM would acquire the state recreation sites.	BLM would continue management of state recreation sites under MOU with MDFWP.
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES</b>			
Private sector initiatives would be limited to outfitting, guiding and boat rental.	A full range of private sector initiatives would be encouraged, ranging from campgrounds to marinas.	Major private sector initiatives would not be allowed on public lands. Private sector initiatives such as outfitting, boat rental, and campground/maintenance would be allowed.	Private sector initiatives (livery services, lodging and eating facilities, maintenance services) would be used to develop a wide range of visitor services.
All private sector initiatives would be managed under the guidance in the RMP.	All private sector initiatives would be managed under the guidance in the RMP.	All private sector initiatives would be managed under the guidance in the RMP.	All private sector initiatives would be managed under the guidance in the RMP.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>			
BLM would continue to cooperate with state and local authorities responsible for law enforcement and search and rescue operations.	Law enforcement would be contracted to local sheriffs departments. Search and rescue operations would be the responsibility of local authorities.	BLM would assume responsibility for law enforcement. BLM would continue coordination with local authorities responsible for search and rescue.	BLM would continue the cooperative efforts and may expand its role in law enforcement and search and rescue operations.

TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY IMPACTS TABLE

ALTERNATIVE A		ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D – PROPOSED
<b>LAND TENURE ADJUSTMENT</b>				
Minerals			If lands with both surface and subsurface rights are obtained, in the Sweet Grass Hills, a protective withdrawal would be pursued. This would be a locally significant, long-term negative impact to mineral development in the area.	
Vegetation	Disposal of 44,143 acres could result in a moderate negative impact if these lands were farmed, thereby destroying native vegetation.	Disposal of 50,117 acres could result in a moderate negative impact if these lands were farmed, thereby destroying native vegetation.	Disposal of 15,689 acres could result in a moderate negative impact if these lands were farmed, thereby destroying native vegetation.	Same as "B"
Wildlife and Fisheries	The loss of 17,858 acres of crucial big game and upland game habitat would be a moderate negative impact.	The loss of 9,885 acres of crucial big game and upland game habitat would be a moderate negative impact.	The loss of 625 acres of crucial big game and upland game habitat would be a moderate negative impact.	Same as "B"
	Acquisitions of crucial value wildlife areas would produce moderate positive impacts.	Same as "A"	Same as "A"	Same as "A"
Grazing	There could be a moderate positive impact to management opportunities if private land is acquired in areas of predominately public land. A total of 44,143 acres could be exchanged.	There could be a moderate positive impact to management opportunities if private land is acquired in areas of predominately public land. A total of 50,117 acres could be exchanged.	There could be a moderate positive impact to management opportunities if private land is acquired in areas of predominately public land. A total of 15,689 acres could be exchanged.	Same as "B"
		If these 50,117 acres were sold there would be a moderate decrease in grazing management opportunities.	If 15,689 acres were sold there would be a moderate decrease in grazing management opportunities.	Same as "B"
Recreation	Land adjustments could provide significant positive impacts because of increased public access and consolidated public lands.	Same as "A"	Same as "A"	Same as "A"
<b>OFF-ROAD VEHICLE MANAGEMENT</b>				
Soils	Open ORV use on 168,855 acres of sedimentary soils would create locally significant negative impacts because of increased erosion.	Open ORV use on 285,190 acres of sedimentary soils would create locally significant negative impacts because of increased erosion.		
	Limiting ORV use on 148,335 acres of sedimentary soils would create locally significant but moderate overall positive impacts through decreased disturbance to fragile soils.	Limiting ORV use on 32,000 acres of sedimentary soils would create locally significant but moderate overall positive impacts through decreased disturbance to fragile soils.	Limiting ORV use on 317,190 acres of sedimentary soils would result in locally significant but moderate overall positive impacts through decreased disturbance to fragile soils.	Same as "C"
	ORV use in riparian areas would create locally significant negative impact from erosion.	Same as "A"		
	ORV use could create locally significant impacts to soils along existing roads and trails as vehicles maneuver around rutted areas and potholes.	Same as "A"	Same as "A"	Same as "A"
Water	Open ORV use on 168,855 acres of sedimentary soils would create locally significant negative impacts because of increased erosion.	Open ORV use on 285,190 acres of sedimentary soils would create locally significant negative impacts because of increased erosion.	Same as "A"	Same as "A"
	Limiting ORV use on 148,335 acres of sedimentary soils would create locally significant but moderate overall positive impacts.	Limiting ORV use on 32,000 acres of sedimentary soils would create locally significant but moderate overall positive impacts.	Limiting ORV use on 317,190 acres of sedimentary soils would result in locally significant but moderate overall positive impacts because of decreased erosion.	Same as "C"
	ORV use in riparian areas would create locally significant negative impacts from increased sedimentation.	Same as "A"		
	ORV use could create locally significant impacts to water along existing roads and trails as vehicles maneuver around rutted areas and potholes.	Same as "A"	Same as "A"	Same as "A"
Vegetation	ORV impacts to vegetation could be locally significant and negative in an intensive ORV use area presently experiencing severe impacts in 6 acres.	ORV impacts to vegetation could be locally significant and negative in an intensive ORV use which may experience severe impacts on 20 acres.	Moderate positive benefits would result from greater restrictions on ORV use.	Same as "C"
Wildlife and Fisheries		Moderate impacts to wildlife would result from habitat deterioration and stress from social intolerance in the sedimentary breaks soil areas (Missouri Breaks).	Moderate positive benefits would occur from seasonal protection of crucial wildlife habitat.	Same as "C"
Cultural	The potential exists for locally moderate long-term impacts through the loss of cultural sites in areas open to ORV use.	Same as "A"		

**TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY IMPACTS TABLE (Continued)**

ALTERNATIVE A		ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D — PROPOSED
Grazing		About 20 acres of vegetation in the intensive use area would be severely impacted, resulting in a locally significant negative impact.		
RIGHT-OF-WAY LOCATION				
Soil	Locally significant negative erosion impacts would occur on 100,000 acres of sedimentary soils with slopes greater than 25% and riparian areas.	Locally significant negative erosion impacts would occur on 72,000 acres of sedimentary soils with slopes greater than 25% and riparian areas.	Locally significant impacts could occur with ROW location through the windows in the UMNWSR and associated disturbance in sedimentary breaks soil types and in riparian areas.	Same as "C"
Water	Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 100,000 acres of sedimentary soils with slopes greater than 25%.	Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 72,000 acres of sedimentary soils with slopes greater than 25%.	Locally significant impacts could occur with ROW location through the windows in the UMNWSR and associated disturbance in sedimentary breaks soil types.	Same as "C"
Minerals	Leaving the planning area open to ROW location would result in a moderate positive impact to the minerals industry by allowing mineral companies to select the most cost effective route.		Requiring the minerals industry to locate pipelines around designated ROW avoidance areas would be a locally moderate negative impact.	Same as "C"
Vegetation			Moderate beneficial impacts would occur because ROWs would be excluded in several areas and avoided in several others.	Same as "C"
Wildlife	Locally significant negative impacts to raptors would occur because of construction, maintenance and physical hazards of transmission lines.	Same as "A"		
Social and Economics			A locally moderate negative impact to the mineral and utility industry would result from increased transmission line routing costs.	Same as "C"
EMPHASIS AREAS				
Soil			COW CREEK — Intensive management of riparian areas would produce locally significant positive impacts to the soils in those areas.	Same as "C"
Water			COW CREEK — Intensive management of riparian areas would produce locally significant positive impacts to streambank stability and water quality.	Same as "C"
Minerals			KEVIN RIM — Stipulations to protect raptor species and cultural resources may significantly increase the operation costs for oil and gas developers.	Same as "C"
			SWEET GRASS HILLS — The protective withdrawal on the Sweet Grass Hills could result in a significant negative impact due to drainage of federal oil and gas by producing fee and state wells on adjacent lands.	
			SWEET GRASS HILLS — The additional workload involved in preparing a Plan of Operations, over that of a notice, and the need to wait for formal approval would be a moderate negative impact to operators and development of the mineral resources.	Same as "C"
	SWEET GRASS HILLS — Opening the BR withdrawal on East Butte to mineral entry would produce a significant positive impact for the minerals industry.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS — Placing the BR lands under protective withdrawal would be significant negative impact to the minerals industry. Exploration to assess mineral development potential and mining to extract economic deposits would not be allowed since there are no valid existing rights in the BR withdrawal.	Same as "A"
Vegetation	SWEET GRASS HILLS — Major hardrock mining development could produce locally significant negative impacts to vegetation.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS — Major hardrock mining developments on valid, existing claims could produce locally significant negative impacts to vegetation.	Same as "A"
			COW CREEK — Intensive management of riparian areas would produce locally significant positive impacts to vegetation.	Same as "C"



**TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY IMPACTS TABLE (Continued)**

	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D – PROPOSED
Wildlife and Fisheries	KEVIN RIM — Surface disturbing activities could produce significant negative impacts to raptor breeding and nesting activities, which may result in nest or territory abandonment.	Same as "A"	KEVIN RIM — Restrictions on mineral leases and land use authorizations would produce locally significant positive impacts to raptors.	Same as "C"
			SWEET GRASS HILLS — Modifications in grazing management and raptor stipulations would produce locally significant positive impacts for elk and raptors.	Same as "C"
	SWEET GRASS HILLS — A large open pit hardrock mining operation could significantly reduce big game habitat.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS — Large open pit hardrock mining operations on valid, existing claims could significantly reduce big game habitat.	Same as "A"
			COW CREEK — Intensive management of riparian areas would produce locally significant wildlife habitat improvements.	Same as "C"
Cultural	KEVIN RIM — A Moderate negative impact could occur to cultural resources from unmitigatable oil and gas development.	Same as "A"	KEVIN RIM — The stipulations along the Kevin Rim escarpment would produce a moderate positive impact for cultural resources.	Same as "C"
	SWEET GRASS HILLS — Significant negative impacts to Native American religious sites would occur from mineral and other developments in the Sweet Grass Hills.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS — Restriction on mining activity and greater emphasis on resource management could produce a moderate positive impact for cultural resources.	Same as "A"
			COW CREEK — More stringent development standards would produce significant positive impacts for cultural resources.	Same as "C"
	SWEET GRASS HILLS — Opening the BR withdrawal on East Butte to mineral entry would produce a significant negative impact to cultural resources.	Same as "A"		Same as "A"
Recreation			COW CREEK — A moderate positive impact would occur because visual and natural qualities would be enhanced and protected.	Same as "C"
Social and Economics			KEVIN RIM — Restrictions along the Kevin Rim escarpment could result in a locally significant increase in operating costs for oil and gas developers, but would have a minor overall impact to the economy of the planning area.	Same as "C"
	SWEET GRASS HILLS — This alternative could cause a significant impact in the solitude and undisturbed environment of the area for Native Americans who use it for religious purposes.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS — This alternative could result in a moderate impact due to the restrictions on the disturbance to the solitude and environment in the area of valid, existing mining claims. This would impact Native Americans using the area for religious purposes.	Same as "A"
<b>UPPER MISSOURI NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER</b>				
Soil		Increased human traffic at recreation facilities along the UMNWSR would reduce streambank stability and cause soil compaction. This would be a localized moderate impact.		
Minerals	Drainage of federal minerals by future private and state wells adjacent to BLM lands could be a significant negative impact.	Same as "A"	Same as "A"	Same as "A"
Vegetation	Locally significant impacts could occur because of increased soil compaction, erosion, and trampling with a large increase in visitor use.	Same as "A"		
Cultural			Moderate positive impacts would occur due to increased public awareness of cultural values through increased development of interpretive sites.	Same as "C"